





THE
POETICAL WORKS

OF
LEIGH HUNT.

A NEW EDITION,
CONTAINING MANY PIECES NOW FIRST COLLECTED.

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PREFACE

WHEN the Author was a boy at school, writing twice the number of verses required by the master, and thinking of nothing but poetry and friendship, he used to look at one of the pocket volumes of Cooke's Edition of Gray, Collins, and others, then in course of publication, and fancy that if ever he could produce anything of that sort in that shape, he should consider himself as having attained the happiest end of a human being's existence. The form had become dear to him for the contents, and the reputation seemed proved by the cheapness. He has lived to qualify the opinion not a little, as far as others are concerned in what he does; but in respect to his wishes for his mere self, they are precisely the same as they were then; and when Mr. Moxon proposed to him the present volume, he seemed to realise the object of his life, and to require no other prosperity.

In order, however, not to confound the show of success with the substance, in any greater degree than it might be in his power to avoid, he has taken the opportunity, in this edition of his poems, to evince a proper respect for a chance of their dura-

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PREFACE.

tion beyond the day, by giving them a careful revision, rejecting superfluities, and correcting mistakes of all kinds. To this end he has re-written a considerable portion of the "Story of Rimini," not because he would give up to wholesale objection what has had the good fortune to obtain the regard of the public, but because he wrote it before he visited Italy, had made it in some respects too English, and, above all, had told an imaginary story instead of the real one. The landscapes are now freed from northern inconsistencies; the moral is no longer endangered, as some thought it, by dwelling too much on the metaphysics of a case of conscience; and the story contains the real catastrophe and the spirit of the probable characters of all the parties, without contradicting the known truth by any of the circumstances invented. He is aware of the objections made to altered poems in general, and heartily agrees with them; but the case, as thus stated, becomes, he conceives, an exception to the rule. Dante, who though a very great poet, had a will still greater than his poetry, and was in all things a partisan, was a friend and public agent of the heroine's father, and he has not told the deception that was practised on her. He left it to transpire through the commentators. This point of the story was at no time omitted in the version which the Author, in a fit of youthful confidence, undertook to make from the inimitable original; but, on the other hand, the surprise and murder of the lovers by the husband were converted into a

duel with one, and the remorse of both ; and not a word was said of the husband's ferocious character and personal deformity*. These things, if he is not mistaken, make all the difference on the point in question. He has desired to relate the truth in the poem almost ever since he wrote it ; the moral objections of the critics increased the desire ; and, indeed, he has long ceased to be of opinion, that an author has a right to misrepresent admitted historical facts. He has often, as a reviewer, had occasion to object to the licence in others. It appears to him the next thing to falsifying a portrait ; and possibly even hazards something of that general inconsistency of features, which is observed to result from the painter's misrepresentation of any one of them.

Two additional improvements the Author hopes he has made in this poem. He has delivered it from many weak lines, too carelessly thrown off, and from certain conventionalities of structure, originating in his having had his studies too early directed towards the artificial instead of the natural poets. He had not the luck to possess such a guide in poetry as Keats had in excellent

* A Latin writer, quoted in the "Amori e Rime di Dante Alighieri," p. xcii., says, that he was called Giovanni the Hip-broken (*Sciancato*), adding, that, though he was deformed in body, he had a daring and ferocious mind :—"Johannes Scancatus, sic denominatus, erat mirè claudus ; vir corpore deformis, sed animo audax et ferox." The commentators tell us, that the brother (a very handsome man) was pointed out to Francesca as her future husband, while passing through a square.

Charles Cowden Clarke. The mode of treatment still remains rather material than spiritual. He would venture to prefer, for instance, that of the military procession in "Captain Sword and Captain Pen" to the handling of the same point in the "Story of Rimini." But he could not make alterations to such an extent without writing the whole over again; and though he considers Darwin to have been absurd, when he identified poetry with picture, he regards it as a sin of another extreme against the poet's privilege of universality, to dispute his right to the more tangible imagery of the painter. The descriptions, though long, of that procession, and of the forest, and garden, appear to him to have a certain analogy with the luxury of the South, and at once to heighten and alleviate the catastrophe. If the reader be fatigued with them, he gives himself up to his rebuke. If not, he hopes he shall be defended against more formal objections, on the authority of the critic who said, that every kind of writing was a proper kind, "except the tiresome."

The reader of the "Feast of the Poets" will be good enough to bear in mind, that it was first written a long time ago, never contained all the names that had a right to be in it, and therefore still less professes to contain them now. The Author would have written a new one, on purpose to introduce them, especially Mr. Knowles and his brother dramatists; but the truth is, that these are delicate matters for contemporaries to meddle with; and a young writer will find in after years that he had

better have shown his admiration of reigning names in a shape less particular. Circumstances may even conspire to make him fear misconstructions painful on all sides, where acknowledgment of another sort would seem to give double reasons for its extension. Such are the perplexities in preparation for juvenile confidence! The Author therefore must beg that the "Feast of the Poets" may be regarded rather as a fancy of by-gone years than a criticism. The "Feast of the Violets" is avowedly such. It is not that he thinks less of any of the poets mentioned considered without reference to others, but higher of some than he used; and that the number seated at Apollo's table ought either to have been less or greater. Admiration is a delight and a duty; but when it even implies comparative criticism, it touches upon a peril which among contemporaries is proverbially odious, and not seldom rash and to be repented. A sense of justice, for instance, to a name so great in other respects that it has injured his reputation for poetry (most people finding it difficult to entertain two ideas at once on this subject) compels me to observe, that in fighting hard for the honours of Wordsworth, at a time when the advocacy was not superfluous, I was not sufficiently attentive to those of Coleridge; and that without entering into the comparative merits of the two, or lowering a jot of my estimation of the former, considered in himself, it appears to me, that since the days of Milton there has been no greater name for pure quintessential poetry, than that of the author

of "Christabel" and the "Ancient Mariner." This, of course, is stated out of a sense of what is due on my own part, and not from any overweening supposition that the mere statement of an opinion is to settle the question for others.

A considerable, though in no sense of the word the better part of the poem entitled "Captain Sword and Captain Pen," was devoted to an exhibition of the horrors of war. I detailed them, because, at the time I wrote it, I thought it my duty to do so. That opinion has ceased, owing to the progress of mechanical science and its fusion of nations one with another; for the closeness of their intercourse will assuredly render war as absurd and impossible by-and-by, as it would be for Manchester to fight with Birmingham, or Holborn Hill with the Strand. The superfluous part of these horrors, therefore, has disappeared from the poem, and only enough of them been retained to give entireness to the subject, and a due contrasting effect to the blessings of the growth of knowledge and good-will. I must add, that I objected to war in no spirit of mere inconsiderate common-place, or effeminate shrinking from pain; as any reader may see who chooses to look at the original edition with its notes. Indeed, if I had shrunk from pain, I should have avoided the subject; for it sometimes gave me more than I choose to express; nor would anything but a sense of duty have induced me to go on with it; though if I might venture to state what I regard as the most approaching to poetry, essentially so called, in any of the

longer effusions in this book, I should say it was in passages of this poem, and of the "Legend of Florence."

The "Legend of Florence" is founded on a romance of real life in a periodical Italian publication called the "Florentine Observer" (*Osservatore Fiorentino*). Among the pleasures which I had in writing this play was the melancholy one of thinking that the beloved friend whom I lost in Italy had chosen the same story for a poem, of which he has left a fragment. I was thus united with him, in a manner, once more, and upon a subject to which even his noble dramatic genius would have welcomed me for love's sake, and the moral's.

May I be permitted to add, that I shall never forget the honour which Her Majesty did my play in coming twice to see it, and the gracious words in which she was pleased to express her approbation of it to the manager? Doubtless the beauty of Miss Ellen Tree's acting, and of the occasional music, contributed to procure me this good fortune; not perhaps without a condescending wish on the part of the Royal visitor to assist a writer who was known to be struggling with difficulties, and who had already tasted her beneficence. Most heartily do I give up any portion of the credit of it, attributable to her Majesty's princely good-nature. It was not the last benefit which the Royal disposition had conferred on me; for I am further indebted to it for the discovery, that "Laureat" odes, or such as by an extra-official courtesy might have been

termed such, may be written out of the truest and even the most disinterested feelings of gratitude ; and I hereby beg pardon of all Laureats, past and to come, for anything I may have formerly said against them, provided their effusions have as much sincerity as my own.

As to any other effusions of a hostile nature poured forth in the course of one of the most stirring periods of political warfare, when I was in the thick of editorial fight, I shall not belie the honesty and heartiness with which such fights may be carried on during the zeal of the moment ; but I have now lived, enjoyed, erred, suffered, and thought enough, to come to the conclusion, that neither modesty of self-knowledge nor largeness of policy is in favour of advancing the circumstances of the community, by attacking individuals who are the creatures of them ; and in accordance with this new sense of duty, the volume offered to the public does not contain, it is trusted, one verse which can give pain to any living being. It aspires to be the reader's companion during his quietest and his kindest moments ; to add zest to intercourse, and love to the love of nature ; and the Author would fain have left nothing in its pages rebukeable either by the cordial voices of the fireside, or by the pensive breath of the wind as it passes by the ear in field or garden.

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NARRATIVE POEMS.

THE STORY OF RIMINI ;

OR,

FRUITS OF A PARENT'S FALSEHOOD.

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.—*Giovanni Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, has won by his victories the hand of the Princess Francesca, daughter of the reigning Count of Ravenna ; and is expected, with a gorgeous procession, to come and marry her. She has never yet seen him. The procession arrives, and is described.*

'Tis morn, and never did a lovelier day
Salute Ravenna from its leafy bay :
For a warm eve, and gentle rains at night,
Have left a sparkling welcome for the light,
And April, with his white hands wet with flowers,
Dazzles the bride-maids, looking from the towers :
Green vineyards and fair orchards, far and near,
Glitter with drops ; and heaven is sapphire clear,
And the lark rings it, and the pine-trees glow,
And odours from the citrons come and go,
And all the landscape—earth, and sky, and sea—
Breathes like a bright-eyed face, that laughs out
openly.

'Tis nature, full of spirits, wak'd and lov'd.
 E'en sloth, to-day, goes quick and unprov'd ;
 For where's the living soul, priest, minstrel, clown,
 Merchant, or lord, that speeds not to the town ?
 Hence happy faces, striking through the green
 Of leafy roads, at every turn are seen ;
 And the far ships, lifting their sails of white
 Like joyful hands, come up with scatter'd light ;
 Come gleaming up—true to the wish'd-for day—
 And chase the whistling brine, and swirl into the bay.

And well may all the world come crowding there,
 If peace returning, and processions rare,
 And, to crown all, a marriage in the spring
 Can set men's hearts and fancies on the wing ;
 For, on this beauteous day, Ravenna's pride—
 The daughter of their prince—becomes a bride ;
 A bride to ransom an exhausted land ;
 And he, whose victories have obtain'd her hand,
 Has taken with the dawn—so flies report—
 His promis'd journey to the expecting court,
 With hasting pomp, and squires of high degree,
 The bold Giovanni, Lord of Rimini.

The road, that way, is lined with anxious eyes,
 And false announcements and fresh laughters rise.
 The horseman hastens through the jeering crowd,
 And finds no horse within the gates allow'd ;
 And who shall tell the drive there, and the din ?
 The bells, the drums, the crowds yet squeezing in,
 The shouts, from mere exuberance of delight,
 And mothers with their babes in sore affright,
 And armed bands making important way,
 Gallant and grave, the lords of holiday ;
 Minstrels, and friars, and beggars many a one
 That pray, and roll their blind eyes in the sun,
 And all the buzzing throngs, that hang like bees
 On roofs, and walls, and tops of garden trees ?

With tap'stries bright the windows overflow,
 By lovely faces brought, that come and go,
 Till by their work the charmers take their seats,
 Themselves the sweetest pictures in the streets,
 In colours, by light awnings beautified ;
 Some re-adjusting tresses newly tied,
 Some turning a trim waist, or o'er the flow
 Of crimson cloths hanging a hand of snow :
 Smiling and laughing some, and some serene,
 But all with flowers, and all with garlands green, }
 And most in fluttering talk, impatient for the scene. }

At length the approaching trumpets, with a start
 On the smooth wind, come dancing to the heart ;
 The crowd are mute ; and, from the southern wall,
 A lordly blast gives welcome to the call.
 Then comes the crush ; and all who best can strive
 In shuffling struggle, tow'rds the palace drive,
 Where, baluster'd and broad, of marble fair,
 Its portico commands the public square :
 For there Count Guido is to hold his state,
 With his fair daughter, seated o'er the gate.
 But far too well the square has been supplied ;
 And, after a rude heave from side to side,
 With angry faces turn'd and nothing gain'd,
 The order, first found easiest, is maintain'd,
 Leaving the pathways only for the crowd,
 The space within for the procession proud.

For in this manner is the square set out :—
 The sides, path-deep, are crowded round about,
 And fac'd with guards, who keep the horse-way clear ;
 And, round a fountain in the midst, appear—
 Seated with knights and ladies, in discourse—
 Rare Tuscan wits and warbling troubadours,
 Whom Guido (for he lov'd the Muse's race)
 Has set there to adorn his public place.
 The seats with boughs are shaded from above
 Of bays and roses,—trees of wit and love ;

And in the midst, fresh whistling through the scene,
 The lightsome fountain starts from out the green,
 Clear and compact ; till, at its height o'errun,
 It shakes its loosening silver in the sun.

There, with the wits and beauties, you may see,
 As in some nest of faëry poetry,
 Some of the chiefs, the noblest in the land,—
 Hugo, and Borso of the Liberal Hand,
 And Gino, and Ridolfo, and the flower
 Of jousters, Everard of the Sylvan Tower ;
 And Felix the Fine Arm, and him who well
 Repaid the Black-Band robbers, Lionel ; [Greek,
 With more that have pluck'd beards of Turk and
 And made the close Venetian lower his sails and
 speak.

There, too, in thickest of the bright-eyed throng,
 Stands a young father of Italian song—
 Guy Cavalcanti, of a knightly race ;
 The poet looks out in his earnest face :
 He with the pheasant's plume—there—bending now:
 Something he speaks around him with a bow,
 And all the listening looks, with nods and flushes,
 Break round him into smiles and grateful blushes.

Another start of trumpets, with reply ;
 And o'er the gate a crimson canopy
 Opens to right and left its flowing shade,
 And Guido issues with the princely maid,
 And sits ;—the courtiers fall on either side ;
 But every look is fixed upon the bride,
 Who seems all thought at first, and hardly hears
 The enormous shout that springs as she appears ;
 Till, as she views the countless gaze below,
 And faces that with grateful homage glow,
 A home to leave and husband yet to see
 Are mix'd with thoughts of lofty charity :
 And hard it is, she thinks, to have no will ;
 But not to bless these thousands, harder still.

With that a keen and quivering sense of tears
 Scarce moves her sweet, proud lip, and disappears ;
 A smile is underneath, and breaks away, [day.
 And round she looks and breathes, as best befits the

What need I tell of cheeks, and lips, and eyes,
 The locks that fall, and bosom's balmy rise ?
 Beauty's whole soul is hers, though shadow'd still
 With anxious thought, and doubtful maiden will ;
 A lip for endless love, should all prove just ;
 An eye that can withdraw into as deep distrust.

While thus with earnest looks the people gaze,
 Another shout the neighb'ring quarters raise :
 The train are in the town, and gathering near
 With noise of cavalry, and trumpets clear,
 A princely music, unbedinn'd with drums ;
 The mighty brass seems opening as it comes ;
 And now it fills, and now it shakes the air,
 And now it bursts into the sounding square ;
 At which the crowd with such a shout rejoice,
 Each thinks he's deafen'd with his neighbour's voice.
 Then with a long-drawn breath the clangours die,
 The palace trumpets give a last reply,
 And clustering hoofs succeed, with stately stir
 Of snortings proud and clinking furniture,—
 The most majestic sound of human will : [still.
 Nought else is heard sometime, the people are so

First come the trumpeters, clad all in white,
 Except the breast, which wears a scutcheon bright.
 By four and four they ride, on horses grey ;
 And as they sit along their easy way,
 To the steed's motion yielding as they go,
 Each plants his trumpet on his saddle-bow.

The heralds next appear, in vests attir'd
 Of stiffening gold with radiant colours fir'd ;
 And then the pursuivants who wait on these,
 All dress'd in painted richness to the knees :

Each rides a dappled horse, and bears a shield,
Charg'd with three heads upon a golden field.*

Twelve ranks of squires come after, twelve in one,
With forked pennons lifted in the sun,
Which tell, as they look backward in the wind,
The bearings of the knights that ride behind.
Their horses are deep bay; and every squire
His master's colour shows in his attire.

These past, and at a lordly distance, come
The knights themselves, and fill the quickening
The flower of Rimini. Apart they ride, [hum—
Two in a rank, their falchions by their side,
But otherwise unarm'd, and clad in hues
Such as their ladies had been pleas'd to chuse,
Bridal and gay,—orange, and pink, and white,—
All but the scarlet cloak for every knight;
Which thrown apart, and hanging loose behind,
Rests on the horse, and ruffles in the wind.
The horses, black and glossy every one,
Supply a further stately unison—
A solemn constancy of martial show;
Their frothy bits keep wrangling as they go.
The bridles red, and saddle-cloths of white,
Match well the blackness with its glossy light,
While the rich horse-cloths, mantling half the steed,
Are some of them all thick with golden thread;
Others have spots, on grounds of different hue—
As burning stars upon a cloth of blue;
Or heart's-ease purple with a velvet light,
Rich from the glary yellow, thickening bright;
Or silver roses in carnation sewn,
Or flowers in heaps, or colours pure alone:
But all go sweeping back, and seem to dress
The forward march with loitering stateliness.

* The arms of the Malatesta family.

The crowd, with difference of delight, admire
Horseman and horse, the motion and the attire.
Some watch the rider's looks as they go by,
Their self-possess'd though pleas'd observancy ;
And some their skill admire, and careless heed,
Or body curving to the rearing steed,
Or patting hand that best persuades the check,
And makes the quarrel up with a proud neck.
Others are bent upon the horses most,—
Their shape, their breed, the glory of their host :
The small bright head, free nostrils, fetlocks clean,
The branching veins ridging the glossy lean,
The start and snatch, as if they felt the comb,
With mouths that fling about the creamy foam,—
The snorting turbulence, the nod, the champing,
The shift, the tossing, and the fiery tramping.

And now the Princess, pale and with fix'd eye,
Perceives the last of those precursors nigh,
Each rank uncovering as they pass in state,
Both to the courtly fountain and the gate ;
And then a second interval succeeds
Of stately length, and then a troop of steeds
Milk-white and azure-draped, Arabian bred,
Each by a blooming boy lightsomely led.
In every limb is seen their faultless race,
A fire well-temper'd, and a free left grace :
Slender their spotless shapes, and greet the sight
With freshness after all those colours bright ;
And as with easy pitch their steps they bear,
Their yielding heads have half a loving air.
These for a princely present are divin'd,
And shew the giver is not far behind.

The talk increases now, and now advance,
Space after space, with many a sprightly prauce,
The pages of the court, in rows of three ;
Of white and crimson in their livery.

Space after space, and still the train appear ;
 A fervid whisper fills the general ear—
 “ Ah—yes—no ! ’tis not he, but ’tis the squires
 Who go before him when his pomp requires.”
 And now his huntsman shows the lessening train,
 Now the squire-carver, and the chamberlain ;
 And now his banner comes, and now his shield,
 Borne by the squire that waits him to the field ;
 And then an interval,—a lordly space ;—
 A pin-drop silence strikes o’er all the place.
 The Princess, from a distance, scarcely knows
 Which way to look ; her colour comes and goes,
 And, with an impulse like a piteous plea,
 She lays her hand upon her father’s knee,
 Who looks upon her with a labour’d smile,
 Gathering it up into his own the while,
 When some one’s voice, as if it knew not how
 To check itself, exclaims, “ The Prince ! now, now ! ”
 And on a milk-white courser, like the air,
 A glorious figure springs into the square :—
 Up, with a burst of thunder, goes the shout,
 And rolls the trembling walls and peopled roofs
 about.

Never was nobler finish of fair sight,—
 ’Twas like the coming of a shape of light ;
 And many a lovely gazer, with a start,
 Felt the quick pleasure smite across her heart.
 The Princess, who at first could scarcely see,
 Though looking still that way from dignity,
 Gathers new courage as the praise goes round,
 And bends her eyes to learn what they have found.
 And see—his horse obeys the check unseen,
 And, with an air ’twixt ardent and serene,
 Letting a fall of curls about his brow,
 He takes, to all, his cap off with a bow.
 Then for another, and a deafening shout,
 And scarfs are way’d, and flowers come pouring out ;

And, shaken by the noise, the reeling air
Sweeps with a giddy whirl among the fair,
And whisks their garments and their shining hair. }

With busy interchange of wonder glows
The crowd, and loves his bravery as he goes ;
But on his shape the gentler sight attends,
Moves as he passes, as he bends him bends,—
Watches his air, his gesture, and his face,
And thinks it never saw such manly grace,
So fine are his bare throat, and curls of black,—
So lightsomely dropt in, his lordly back,—
His thigh so fitted for the tilt or dance,
So heap'd with strength, and turn'd with elegance ;
But, above all, so meaning in his look,
As easy to be read as open book ;
And such true gallantry the sex descries
In the grave thanks within his cordial eyes.
His haughty steed, who seems by turns to be
Vex'd and made proud by that cool mastery,
Shakes at his bit, and rolls his eyes with care,
Reaching with stately step at the fine air ;
And now and then, sidelining his restless pace,
Drops with his hinder legs, and shifts his place,
And feels through all his frame a fiery thrill ;
The princely rider on his back sits still,
And looks where'er he likes, and sways him at his
[will.

Surprise, relief, a joy scarce understood—
Something, in truth, of very gratitude,
And fifty feelings undefin'd and new,
Dart through the bride, and flush her faded hue.
“ Could I but once,” she thinks, “ securely place
A trust for the contents on such a case—
On such a mind, now seemingly beheld—
This chance of mine were hardly one compell'd.”
And see ! the stranger looking with delight
Tow'rd the sweet fountain with its circle bright,

And bending, as he looks, with frequent thanks,
 Beckons a follower to him from the ranks,
 And loos'ning, as he speaks, from its light hold,
 A princely jewel with its chain of gold,
 Sends it, in token he had lov'd him long,
 To the young master of Italian song.
 The poet starts, and with a lowly grace
 Bending his lifted eyes and blushing face,
 Looks after his new friend, who scarcely gone
 In the wide turning, bows, and passes on.

This is sufficient for the destin'd bride :
 She took an interest first, but now a pride ;
 And as the Prince comes riding to the place,
 Baring his head, and raising his fine face,
 She meets his full obeisance with an eye
 Of self-permission and sweet gravity :
 He looks with touch'd respect, and gazes, and goes by. }

CANTO II.

ARGUMENT.—*The Prince is discovered not to be Giovanni Malatesta, but his brother Paulo, whom he has sent as his proxy. Francesca, nevertheless, is persuaded to be affianced, and goes with him to Rimini. Description of the journey, and of the Ravenna Pine-Forest.*

I PASS the followers, and their closing state ;
 The court was enter'd by an outer gate :
 The Count and Princess had retir'd before,
 In time to greet his guest at the hall-door :
 But something seem'd amiss, and there ensued
 Deep talk among the spreading multitude,
 Who stood in groups, or pac'd the measur'd street,
 Filling with earnest hum the noontide heat.
 Nor ceas'd the wonder, as the day increas'd,
 And brought no symptoms of a bridal feast ;
 No mass, no tilt, no largess for the crowd,
 Nothing to answer that procession proud,

But a blank look, as if no court had been—
 Silence without, and secrecy within ;
 And nothing heard by listening at the walls,
 But now and then a bustling through the halls, }
 Or the dim organ rous'd at gathering intervals. }

The truth was this :—The bridegroom had not
 But sent his brother Paulo in his room. [come,
 The former, said to have a handsome face,
 Though lame of foot, (“some victory’s very
 grace ;”—
 So Guido call’d it), yet was stern and proud,
 Little gallant, and had a chilling cloud
 Hanging for ever on his blunt address,
 Which he mistook for sovereign manliness ;—
 But more of this hereafter. Guido knew
 The Prince’s faults ; and he was conscious too,
 That sweet as was his daughter, and prepar’d
 To do her duty where appeal was barr’d,
 She had a sense of marriage, just and free,
 And where the lover wooed but ruggedly,
 Might pause, for aught he knew, and fail to strike
 A chord her own sweet music so unlike.
 The old man, therefore, not unkind at heart,
 Yet fond, from habit, of intrigue and art,
 And little form’d for sentiments like these,
 Which seem’d to him mere maiden niceties,
 (For lovers of the Muse, alas ! could then
 As well as now, be but half-loving men),
 Had thought at once to gratify the pride
 Of his stern neighbour, and secure the bride,
 By telling him, that if, as he had heard,
 Busy he was just then, ’twas but a word, }
 And he might send and wed her by a third ; }

Only the Count thus farther must presume,
 For both their sakes, that still a prince must come.
 The bride meantime was told, and not unmov’d,
 To look for one no sooner seen than lov’d ;

And when Giovanni, struck with what he thought
 Mere proof how his triumphant hand was sought,
 Despatch'd the wish'd-for prince, who was a man
 Noble as eye had seen since earth began,
 The effect was perfect, and the future wife
 Caught in the elaborate snare—perhaps for life.

One truth, however, craft was forc'd to tell,
 And chance, alas ! supported it too well.
 She saw, when they were hous'd, in Guido's face
 A look of stupified surprise take place ;
 Of anger next, of candour in a while,
 And then 'twas told her with a begging smile,
 That Prince Giovanni, to his deep chagrin,
 Had been delay'd by troubles unforeseen,
 But rather than delay his day of bliss,
 (If his fair ruler took it not amiss),
 Had sent his brother Paulo in his stead ;
 " Who," said old Guido, with a nodding head,
 " May well be said to represent his brother,
 For when you see the one, you know the other."

By this time Paulo join'd them where they stood,
 And seeing her in some uneasy mood,
 Chang'd the mere cold respects his brother sent
 To such a strain of cordial compliment,
 And gave her thanks, in terms, and with a face,
 So fill'd with attribution of all grace,—
 That air, in short, which sets you at your ease
 Without implying your perplexities,—
 That what with the surprise in every way,
 The hurry of the time, the appointed day,
 The very shame which now appear'd increas'd,
 Of begging leave to have her hand releas'd,—
 And above all, those tones, and words, and looks
 Which seem'd to realise the dreams of books,
 And help'd her genial fancy to conclude
 That fruit of such a stock must all be good,

She knew no longer how she could oppose.
 Quick was the plighted troth ; and at the close
 The proxy, turning mid the general hush,
 Kiss'd her sweet lips, betwixt a rosy blush.

Two days and nights ensued. At length, a state
 Of trumpets issued from the palace-gate,
 The banners of their brass with favours tied,
 And with a blast proclaim'd the affianc'd bride.
 But not a word the people's silence broke,
 Till something of a gift the herald spoke,
 And bringing the good coin by handfuls out,
 Scatter'd the ready harvest round about ;
 Then burst the mob into a jovial cry,
 And "largess ! largess !" claps against the sky,
 And bold Giovanni's name, the lord of Rimini. }

The rest, however, still were looking on,
 Sullen and mute, and scarce the noise was gone,
 When riding from the gate with banners rear'd,
 Again the gorgeous visitors appear'd.
 The Prince was in his place ; and in a car,
 Before him, glistening like a farewell star,
 Sate the dear lady with her brimming eyes,
 And off they set, through doubtful looks and cries ;
 For some too shrewdly guess'd, and some were vex'd
 At the dull time, and some the whole perplex'd,
 And all great pity thought it to divide
 Two that seem'd made for bridegroom and for bride.
 Ev'n she, whose wits this strange abrupt event
 Had over-borne in pure astonishment,
 Could scarce at times a wilder'd cry forbear
 At leaving her own home and native air ;
 Till passing now the limits of the town,
 And on the last few gazers looking down,
 She saw by the road-side an aged throng,
 Who wanting power to bustle with the strong,
 Had learnt their gracious mistress was to go,
 And gather'd there, an unconcerted show.

Bending they stood, with their old foreheads bare,
 And the winds finger'd with their reverend hair.
 "Farewell, farewell, my friends!" she would have
 But in her throat the leaping accents died, [cried,
 And waving with her hand a vain adieu,
 She dropt her veil, and in her grief withdrew,
 And let the kindly tears their own good course }
 pursue.

The morn was sweet, as when they journey'd last;—
 The smoke from cottage-tops ran bright and fast,
 And every tree in passing, one by one,
 Gleam'd out with twinkles of the golden sun :
 For leafy was the road, with tall array,
 On either side, of mulberry and bay,
 And distant snatches of blue hills between ;
 And there the alder was with its bright green,
 And the broad chesnut, and the poplar's shoot,
 That like a feather waves from head to foot,
 With ever and anon majestic pines ;
 And still, from tree to tree, the early vines }
 Hung garlanding the way in amber lines.

Nor long the Princess kept her from the view
 Of the dear scenes her happy childhood knew ;
 For sitting now, calm from the gush of tears,
 With dreaming eye fix'd down, and half-shut ears,
 Hearing, yet hearing not, the fervent sound
 Of hoofs thick reckoning and the wheel's moist
 round,

A call of "slower," from the farther part
 Of the check'd riders, woke her with a start,
 And looking up again, half sigh, half stare,
 She lifts her veil, and feels the freshening air.

'Tis down a hill they go, gentle indeed,
 And such as with a bold and playful speed }
 Another time they would have scorn'd to heed ; }

But now they take a lady down the hill,
And feel they should consult her gentle will.

And now with thicker shades the pines appear,—
The noise of hoofs grows duller on the ear ;
And quitting suddenly their gravelly toil,
The wheels go spinning o'er a sandy soil.
Here first the silence of the country seems
To come about her with its listening dreams ;
And full of anxious thoughts, half-freed from pain,
She fell into her musing mood again ;
Leaving the others, who had pass'd that way
In careless spirits of the first blithe day,
To look about, and mark the reverend scene,
For awful tales renown'd and everlasting green.

A heavy spot the forest looks at first,
To one grim shade condemn'd, and sandy thirst,
Chequer'd with thorns, and thistles run to seed,
Or plashy pools half-cover'd with green weed,
About whose sides the swarming insects fry
In the hot sun, a noisome company ;
But, entering more and more, they quit the sand
At once, and strike upon a grassy land,
From which the trees as from a carpet rise
In knolls and clumps, in rich varieties.
The knights are for a moment forc'd to rein
Their horses in, which, feeling turf again,
Thrill, and curvet, and long to be at large
To scour the space, and give the winds a charge,
Or pulling tight the bridles as they pass,
Dip their warm mouths into the freshening grass :
But soon in easy rank, from glade to glade,
Proceed they, coasting underneath the shade ;
Some bearing to the cool their placid brows,
Some looking upward through the glimmering
Or peering into spots that inwardly [boughs,
Open green glooms, and half-prepar'd to see

The lady cross it, that as stories tell,
 Ran loud and torn before a knight of hell.*
 Various the trees and passing foliage here,—
 Wild pear, and oak, and dusky juniper,
 With briony between in trails of white,
 And ivy, and the suckle's streaky light,
 And moss, warm gleaming with a sudden mark,
 Like growths of sunshine left upon the bark ;
 And still the pine, flat-topp'd, and dark, and tall,
 In lordly right predominant o'er all.
 Anon the sweet birds, like a sudden throng
 Of happy children, ring their tangled song
 From out the greener trees ; and then a cloud
 Of cawing rooks breaks o'er them, gathering loud
 Like savages at ships ; and then again
 Nothing is heard but their own stately train,
 Or ring-dove that repeats his pensive plea,
 Or startled gull up-screaming toward the sea.
 But scarce their eyes encounter living thing
 Save, now and then, a goat loose wandering,
 Or a few cattle looking up askance
 With ruminant meek mouths and sleepy glance,
 Or once, a plodding woodman, old and bent,
 Passing, half-wond'ring—half indifferent—
 Yet turning at the last to look once more ;
 Then feels his trembling staff, and onward as before.

So ride they pleas'd ;—till now the couching sun
 Levels his final look through shadows dun ;
 And the clear moon, with meek o'er-lifted face,
 Seems come to look into the silvering place.
 Then woke the bride indeed, for then was heard
 The sacred bell by which all hearts are stirr'd,—
 The tongue 'twixt heav'n and earth, the memory
 Which bids adore the Mother and her Child. [mild,
 The train are hush'd ; they halt ; their heads are bare ;
 Earth for a moment breathes angelic air.

* The famous story in Boccaccio and Dryden.

Francesca weeps for lowliness and love ;
Her heart is at the feet of Her who sits above.

Softly they move again through beam and shade ;
Till now by stragglers met, and watch-dogs bay'd,
They quit the piny labyrinths, and soon
Emerge into the full and day-like moon :
Chilling it seems ; and pushing steed on steed,
They start them freshly with a homeward speed.
Then well-known fields they pass, and straggling cots,
Boy-storied trees, and love-remember'd spots,
And turning last a sudden corner, see
The moon-lit towers of wakeful Rimini.
The marble bridge comes heaving forth below
With a long gleam ; and nearer as they go,
They see the still Marecchia, cold and bright,
Sleeping along with face against the light.
A hollow trample now,—a fall of chains,—
The bride has enter'd,—not a voice remains ;—
Night, and a maiden silence, wrap the plains. }

CANTO III.

ARGUMENT.—*Effects of the sight and manners of her husband upon the bride. His character. Paulo discovers the part he had been led to play. Result of the discovery to him and Francesca. Giovanni is called away from Rimini by a revolt. Description of a garden, and of a summer-house.*

WEAK were the moon to welcome princely trains :—
Thousands of lights, thousands of faces, strains
Of music upon music, roaring showers,
High as the roofs, of blessings mix'd with flowers ;
Through these, with one huge hopeful wild accord,
The gentle lady of a fiery lord
Is welcom'd, and is borne straight to the halls
That hold his presence in the palace walls ;

And there, as pale as death, the future wife
Looks on his face that is to sway her life.
It stoop'd ; she knelt ; a kiss was on her brow ;
And two huge hands rais'd her she scarce knew how.

Oh, foolish, false old man ! now boast thine art,
That has undone thee in a daughter's heart.

Great was the likeness that the brothers bore ;
The lie spoke truth in that, and lied the more.
Not that the face on which the lady stared
Was hideous ; nay, 'twas handsome ; yet it scared.
The likeness was of race, the difference dire—
The brows were shadow'd with a stormy fire ;
The handsome features had a wild excess,
That discommended e'en the handsomeness ;
And though a smile the lip now gentlier warm'd,
The whole big face o'erhung a trunk deform'd,—
Warp'd in the shoulder, broken at the hip,
Though strong withal, nor spoilt for soldiership ;
A heap of vigour planted on two stands
Of shapeless bone, and hung with giant hands.

Compare with this the shape that fetch'd the bride !
Compare the face now gazing by its side !
A face, in which was nothing e'en to call
A stamp exclusive and professional :
No courtier's face, and yet the smile was there ;
No scholar's, yet the look was deep and rare ;
No soldier's, for the power was all of mind,
Too true for violence, and too refin'd :
A countenance, in short, seem'd made to show
How far the genuine flesh and blood would go ;
A morning glass of unaffected nature,
Something that baffled looks of loftier feature,—
The visage of a glorious human creature. }

Nevertheless, the cripple foremost there,
Stern gainer by a crafty father's care,

But ignorant of the plot, and aught beside,
 Except that he had won a peerless bride,—
 This vision, dress'd beyond its own dress'd court
 To cloak defects that still belied its port,
 Gave the bewilder'd beauty what was meant
 For thanks so gracious, flattery so content,
 And spoke in tones so harsh, yet so assur'd,
 So proud of a good fortune now secur'd,
 That her low answers, for mere shame, implied
 Thanks for his thanks, and pleasure in his pride ;
 And so the organ blew, and the priest read, [said.
 And under his grim gaze the life-long words were

A banquet follow'd, not in form and state,
 But small, and cheerful, and considerate ;
 Her maidens half-enclos'd her ; and her lord
 With such mild grace presided at the board,
 And time went flowing in a tide so fair,
 That from the calm she felt a new despair.—
 Suddenly her eyes clos'd, her lips turn'd white,
 The maidens in alarm enclos'd her quite,
 And the Prince rose, but with no gentle looks ;
 He bade them give her air, with sharp rebukes,
 Grasp'd her himself with a suspicious force,
 And altogether show'd a mood so coarse,
 So hasty, and to love so ill attun'd,
 That, with her own goodwill, the lady swoon'd.

Alas for wrongs that nature does the frame !
 The pride she gives compensates not the shame.
 And yet why moot those puzzles ? 'tis the pride,
 And not the shape, were still the thing to hide.
 Spirits there are (I 've known them) that like gods
 Who dwelt of old in rustical abodes, [and wise,
 Have beam'd through clay the homeliest, bright
 And made divinest windows of the eyes.
 Two fiends possess'd Giovanni's,—Will and Scorn ;
 And high they held him, till a third was born.

He strove to hide the secret from himself,—
But his shape rode him like some clinging elf
At once too scorn'd and dreaded to be own'd.
Valour, and wit, and victory enthron'd,
Might bind, he thought, a woman to his worth,
Beyond the threads of all the fops on earth ;
But on his secret soul the fiend still hung,
Darken'd his face, made sour and fierce his tongue,
And was preparing now a place for thee
In his wild heart, O murderous Jealousy !

Not without virtues was the Prince. Who is ?
But all were marr'd by moods and tyrannies.
Brave, decent, splendid, faithful to his word,
Late watching, busy with the first that stirr'd,
Yet rude, sarcastic, ever in the vein
To give the last thing he would suffer,—pain,
He made his rank serve meanly to his gall,
And thought his least good word a salve for all.
Virtues in him of no such marvellous weight
Claim'd tow'rd themselves the exercise of great.
He kept no reckoning with his sweets and sour ;
He'd hold a sullen countenance for hours,
And then if pleas'd to cheer himself a space,
Look for th' immediate rapture in your face,
And wonder that a cloud could still be there,
How small soever, when his own was fair.
Yet such is conscience, so design'd to keep
Stern central watch, though fancied fast asleep,
And so much knowledge of oneself there lies
Cored, after all, in our complacencies,
That no suspicion touch'd his temper more
Than that of wanting on the generous score :
He overwhelm'd it with a weight of scorn,
Was proud at eve, inflexible at morn,
In short, ungenerous for a week to come,
And all to strike that desperate error dumb.

Taste had he, in a word, for high-turn'd merit,
 But not the patience or the genial spirit ;
 And so he made, 'twixt daring and defect,
 A sort of fierce demand on your respect,—
 Which, if assisted by his high degree,
 It gave him in some eyes a dignity,
 And struck a meaner deference in the small,
 Left him at last unloveable with all.

What sort of life the bride and bridegroom led
 From that first jar the history hath not said :
 No happy one, to guess from looks constrain'd,
 Attentions over-wrought, and pleasures feign'd.
 The Prince, 'twas clear, was anxious to imply
 That all was love and grave felicity ;
 The least suspicion of his pride's eclipse
 Blacken'd his lowering brow, and blanch'd his lips,
 And dreadful look'd he underneath his wrath ;—
 Francesca kept one tranquil-seeming path,
 Mild with her lord, generous to high and low,—
 But in her heart was anger too, and woe.

Paulo meantime, the Prince that fetch'd the bride
 (Oh, shame that lur'd him from a brother's side !)
 Had learnt, I know not how, the secret snare,
 That gave her up to his admiring care.
 Some babbler, may-be, of old Guido's court,
 Or foolish friend had told him, half in sport ;
 But to his heart the fatal flattery went,
 And grave he grew, and inwardly intent,
 And ran back in his mind, with sudden spring,
 Look, gesture, smile, speech, silence, everything,
 E'en what before had seem'd indifference,
 And read them over in another sense.
 Then would he blush with sudden self-disdain,
 To think how fanciful he was, and vain ;
 And with half angry, half regretful sigh,
 Tossing his chin, and feigning a free eye,

Breathe off, as 'twere, the idle tale, and look
 About him for his falcon or his book ;
 Scorning that ever he should entertain
 One thought that in the end might give his brother
 pain.

Not that he lov'd him much, or could ; but still
 Brother was brother, and ill visions ill.

This start, however, came so often round,—
 So often fell he in deep thought, and found
 Occasion to renew his carelessness,
 Yet every time the little power grown less,
 That by degrees, half wearied, half inclin'd,
 To the sweet struggling image he resign'd ;
 And merely, as he thought, to make the best
 Of what by force would come about his breast,
 Began to bend down his admiring eyes
 On all her soul-rich looks and qualities,
 Turning their shapely sweetness every way,
 Till 'twas his food and habit day by day,
 And she became companion of his thought ;—
 Oh wretched sire ! thy snare has yet but half been
 wrought.

Love by the object lov'd is soon discern'd,
 And grateful pity is love half return'd.
 Of pity for herself the rest was made,
 Of first impressions and belief betray'd ;
 Of all which the unhappy sire had plann'd
 To fix his dove within the falcon's hand.
 Bright grew the morn whenever Paulo came ;
 The only word to write was either's name ;
 Soft in each other's presence fell their speech ;
 Each, though they look'd not, felt they saw but
 each ;
 'Twas day, 'twas night, as either came or went,
 And bliss was in two hearts, with misery strangely
 blent.

Oh, now ye gentle hearts, now think awhile,
 Now while ye still can think and still can smile;
 Thou, Paulo, most ;—whom, though the most to
 blame,
 The world will visit with but half the shame.
 Bethink thee of the future days of one
 Who holds her heart the rightest heart undone.
 Thou holdest not thine such. Be kind and wise ;—
 Where creeps the once frank wisdom of thine eyes ?
 To meet e'en thus may cost her many a tear :
 “ Meet not at all ! ” cries Fate, to all who love and
 fear.

A fop there was, rich, noble, well receiv'd,
 Who, pleas'd to think the Princess inly griev'd,
 Had dar'd to hope, beside the lion's bower,
 Presumptuous fool ! to play the paramour.
 Watching his time one day, when the grim lord
 Had left her presence with an angry word,
 And giving her a kind, adoring glance,
 The coxcomb feign'd to press her hand by chance ;
 The Princess gaz'd a moment with calm eyes,
 Then bade him call the page that fann'd away the flies.

For days, for weeks, the daring coward shook
 At dreams of daggers in the Prince's look,
 Till finding nothing said, the shame and fright
 Turn'd his conceited misery to spite.
 The lady's silence might itself be fear ;
 What if their lurk'd some wondrous rival near ?
 He watch'd.—He watch'd all movements, looks,
 words, sighs,
 And soon found cause to bless his shabby eyes.

It chanc'd alas ! that for some tax abhorr'd,
 A conquer'd district fell from its new lord ;
 Black as a storm the Prince the frontier cross'd
 In fury to regain his province lost,

Leaving his brother, who had been from home
 On state affairs, to govern in his room.
 Right zealous was the brother ; nor had aught
 Yet giv'n Giovanni one mistrusting thought.
 He deem'd his consort cold as wintriest night,
 Paulo a kind of very fop of right ;
 For though he cloak'd his own unshapeliness,
 And thought to glorify his power, with dress,
 He held all virtues, not in his rough ken,
 But pickthank pedantries in handsome men.

The Prince had will'd, however, that his wife
 Should lead, till his return, a closer life.
 She therefore disappear'd ; not pleas'd, not proud
 To have her judgment still no voice allow'd ;
 Not without many a gentle hope repress'd,
 And tears ; yet conscious that retreat was best.
 Besides, she lov'd the place to which she went—
 A bower, a nest, in which her grief had spent
 Its calmest time : and as it was her last
 As well as sweetest, and the fate comes fast
 That is to fill it with a dreadful cry,
 And make its walls ghastly to passers by,
 I'll hold the gentle reader for a space
 Ling'ring with piteous wonder in the place.

A noble range it was, of many a rood,
 Wall'd and tree-girt, and ending in a wood.
 A small sweet house o'erlook'd it from a nest
 Of pines :—all wood and garden was the rest,
 Lawn, and green lane, and covert :—and it had
 A winding stream about it, clear and glad,
 With here and there a swan, the creature born
 To be the only graceful shape of scorn.
 The flower-beds all were liberal of delight :
 Roses in heaps were there, both red and white,
 Lilies angelical, and gorgeous glooms
 Of wall-flowers, and blue hyacinths, and blooms

Hanging thick clusters from light boughs ; in short,
All the sweet cups to which the bees resort,
With plots of grass, and leafier walks between
Of red geraniums, and of jessamine,
And orange, whose warm leaves so finely suit,
And look as if they shade a golden fruit ;
And midst the flow'rs, turf'd round beneath a shade
Of darksome pines, a babbling fountain play'd,
And 'twixt their shafts you saw the water bright,
Which through the tops glimmer'd with show'ring
So now you stood to think what odours best [light.
Made the air happy in that lovely nest ;
And now you went beside the flowers, with eyes
Earnest as bees, restless as butterflies ;
And then turn'd off into a shadier walk
Close and continuous, fit for lover's talk ;
And then pursued the stream, and as you trod
Onward and onward o'er the velvet sod,
Felt on your face an air, watery and sweet,
And a new sense in your soft-lighting feet.
At last you enter'd shades indeed, the wood,
Broken with glens and pits, and glades far-view'd,
Through which the distant palace now and then
Look'd lordly forth with many-window'd ken ;
A land of trees,—which reaching round about
In shady blessing stretch'd their old arms out ;
With spots of sunny openings, and with nooks
To lie and read in, sloping into brooks,
Where at her drink you startled the slim deer,
Retreating lightly with a lovely fear.
And all about, the birds kept leafy house,
And sung and darted in and out the boughs ;
And all about, a lovely sky of blue
Clearly was felt, or down the leaves laugh'd through ;
And here and there, in every part, were seats,
Some in the open walks, some in retreats,—
With bowering leaves o'erhead, to which the eye
Look'd up half sweetly and half awfully,—

Places of nestling green, for poets made,
 Where, when the sunshine struck a yellow shade,
 The rugged trunks, to inward peeping sight,
 Throng'd in dark pillars up the gold green light.

But 'twixt the wood and flowery walks, half-way,
 And form'd of both, the loveliest portion lay,—
 A spot, that struck you like enchanted ground :—
 It was a shallow dell, set in a mound
 Of sloping orchards,—fig, and almond trees,
 Cherry and pine, with some few cypresses ;
 Down by whose roots, descending darkly still,
 (You saw it not, but heard) there gush'd a rill,
 Whose low sweet talking seem'd as if it said
 Something eternal to that happy shade.
 The ground within was lawn, with fruits and flowers
 Heap'd towards the centre, half of citron bowers ;
 And in the middle of those golden trees,
 Half seen amidst the globy oranges,
 Lurk'd a rare summer-house, a lovely sight,—
 Small, marble, well-proportion'd, creamy white,
 Its top with vine-leaves sprinkled,—but no more,—
 And a young bay-tree either side the door.
 The door was to the wood, forward and square,
 The rest was domed at top, and circular ;
 And through the dome the only light came in.
 Ting'd as it enter'd by the vine-leaves thin.

It was a beauteous piece of ancient skill,
 Spar'd from the rage of war, and perfect still ;
 By some suppos'd the work of fairy hands,—
 Fam'd for luxurious taste, and choice of lands,
 Alcina or Morgana,—who from fights
 And errant fame inveigled amorous knights,
 And liv'd with them in a long round of blisses,
 Feasts, concerts, baths, and bower-enshaded kisses.
 But 'twas a temple, as its sculpture told,
 Built to the Nymphs that haunted there of old ;

For o'er the door was carv'd a sacrifice
 By girls and shepherds brought, with reverend eyes,
 Of sylvan drinks and foods, simple and sweet,
 And goats with struggling horns and planted feet :
 And round about, ran, on a line with this,
 In like relief, a world of pagan bliss, [selves ;
 That shew'd, in various scenes, the nymphs them-
 Some by the water-side, on bowery shelves
 Leaning at will,—some in the stream at play,—
 Some pelting the young Fauns with buds of May,—
 Or half-asleep pretending not to see
 The latter in the brakes come creepingly,
 While from their careless urns, lying aside
 In the long grass, the straggling waters glide.
 Never, be sure, before or since was seen
 A summer-house so fine in such a nest of green.

Ah happy place ! balm of regrets and fears,
 E'en when thy very loveliness drew tears !
 The time is coming, when to hear thee nam'd
 Will be to make Love, Guilt, Revenge's self asham'd.

All the sweet range, wood, flower-bed, grassy plot,
 Francesca lov'd, but most of all this spot.
 Whenever she walk'd forth, wherever went
 About the grounds, to this at last she bent :
 Here she had brought a lute and a few books ;
 Here would she lie for hours, often with looks
 More sorrowful by far, yet sweeter too ;
 Sometimes with firmer comfort, which she drew
 From sense of injury's self, and truth sustain'd :
 Sometimes with rarest resignation, gain'd
 From meek self-pitying mixtures of extremes
 Of hope and soft despair, and child-like dreams,
 And all that promising calm smile we see
 In Nature's face, when we look patiently.
 Then would she think of heaven ; and you might hear
 Sometimes, when everything was hush'd and clear,

Her sweet, rich voice from out those shades emerging,
 Singing the evening anthem to the Virgin.
 The gardeners, and the rest, who serv'd the place,
 And bless'd whenever they beheld her face,
 Knelt when they heard it, bowing and uncover'd,
 And felt as if in air some sainted beauty hover'd.

Oh weak old man ! Love, saintliest life, and she,
 Might all have dwelt together, but for thee.

One day,—'twas on a gentle, autumn noon,
 When the cicalé cease to mar the tune
 Of birds and brooks—and morning work was done,
 And shades had heavy outlines in the sun,—
 The Princess came to her accustomed bower
 To get her, if she could, a soothing hour ;
 Trying, as she was used, to leave her cares
 Without, and slumberously enjoy the airs,
 And the low-talking leaves, and that cool light
 The vines let in, and all that hushing sight
 Of closing wood seen through the opening door,
 And distant plash of waters tumbling o'er,
 And smell of citron blooms, and fifty luxuries more. }

She tried as usual for the trial's sake,
 For even that diminish'd her heart-ache ;
 And never yet, how ill soe'er at ease,
 Came she for nothing 'midst the flowers and trees.
 Yet how it was she knew not, but that day
 She seem'd to feel too lightly borne away,—
 Too much reliev'd,—too much inclin'd to draw
 A careless joy from every thing she saw,
 And looking round her with a new-born eye,
 As if some tree of knowledge had been nigh,
 To taste of nature primitive and free,
 And bask at ease in her heart's liberty.

Painfully clear those rising thoughts appear'd,
 With something dark at bottom that she fear'd .

And turning from the trees her thoughtful look,
She reach'd o'er head, and took her down a book,
And fell to reading with as fix'd an air,
As though she had been wrapt since morning there.

'Twas "Launcelot of the Lake," a bright romance,
That like a trumpet made young pulses dance,
Yet had a softer note that shook still more :—
She had begun it but the day before,
And read with a full heart, half sweet, half sad,
How old King Ban was spoil'd of all he had
But one fair castle : how one summer's day
With his fair queen and child he went away
In hopes King Arthur might resent his wrong ;
How reaching by himself a hill ere long,
He turn'd to give his castle a last look,
And saw its calm white face ; and how a smoke,
As he was looking, burst in volumes forth,
And good King Ban saw all that he was worth,
And his fair castle burning to the ground,
So that his wearied pulse felt overwound,
And he lay down, and said a prayer apart
For those he lov'd, and broke his poor old heart.
Then read she of the queen with her young child,
How she came up, and nearly had gone wild,
And how in journeying on in her despair,
She reach'd a lake, and met a lady there,
Who pitied her, and took the baby sweet
Into her arms, when lo ! with closing feet
She sprang up all at once, like bird from brake,
And vanish'd with him underneath the lake.
Like stone thereat the mother stood, alas !—
The fairy of the place the lady was,
And Launcelot (so the boy was call'd) became
Her pupil, till in search of knightly fame
He went to Arthur's court, and play'd his part
So rarely, and display'd so frank a heart,
That what with all his charms of look and limb,
The Queen Geneura fell in love with him :—

And here, such interest in the tale she took,
 Francesca's eyes went deeper in the book.

Ready she sat with one hand to turn o'er
 The leaf, to which her thoughts ran on before,
 The other on the table, half enwreath'd
 In the thick tresses over which she breath'd.
 So sat she fix'd, and so observ'd was she
 Of one, who at the door stood tenderly,—
 Paulo,—who from a window seeing her
 Go strait across the lawn, and guessing where,
 Had thought she was in tears, and found, that day,
 His usual efforts vain to keep away.
 Twice had he seen her since the Prince was gone,
 On some small matter needing unison ;
 Twice linger'd, and convers'd, and grown long
 friends ;
 But not till now where no one else attends.—
 “ May I come in ? ” said he :—it made her start,—
 That smiling voice ;—she colour'd, press'd her heart
 A moment, as for breath, and then with free
 And usual tone said,—“ O yes,—certainly.”
 There's wont to be, at conscious times like these,
 An affectation of a bright-eyed ease,
 An air of something quite serene and sure,
 As if to seem so, were to be, secure.
 With this the lovers met, with this they spoke,
 With this sat down to read the self-same book,
 And Paulo, by degrees, gently embrac'd
 With one permitted arm her lovely waist ;
 And both their cheeks, like peaches on a tree,
 Came with a touch together thrillingly,
 And o'er the book they hung, and nothing said,
 And every lingering page grew longer as they read.

As thus they sat, and felt with leaps of heart
 Their colour change, they came upon the part
 Where fond Geneura, with her flame long nurst,
 Smil'd upon Launcelot, when he kiss'd her first :—

That touch, at last, through every fibre slid ;
 And Paulo turn'd, scarce knowing what he did,
 Only he felt he could no more dissemble,
 And kiss'd her, mouth to mouth, all in a tremble.—
 Oh then she wept,—the poor Francesca wept ;
 And pardon oft he pray'd ; and then she swept
 The tears away, and look'd him in the face,
 And, well as words might save the truth disgrace,
 She told him all, up to that very hour,
 The father's guile, th' undwelt-in bridal bower,—
 And wish'd for wings on which they two might soar }
 Far, far away, as doves to their own shore,
 With claim from none.—That day they read no }
 more.

CANTO IV.

ARGUMENT.—*The lovers are betrayed to the Prince. He slays them, and sends their bodies in one hearse to Ravenna.*

BUT other thoughts, on other wings than theirs,
 Came bringing them, ere long, their own despairs.
 The spiteful fop I spoke of, he that set
 His eyes at work to pay his anger's debt,—
 This idiot, prying from a neighb'ring tower,
 Had watch'd the lover to the lady's bower,
 And flew to make a madman of her lord, [horr'd.
 Just then encamp'd with loss, a shame his soul ab-

Pale first, then red, his eyes upon the stretch,
 Then deadly white, the husband heard the wretch,
 Who in soft terms, almost with lurking smile,
 Ran on, expressing his "regret" the while.
 The husband, prince, cripple, and brother heard ;
 Then seem'd astonish'd at the man ; then stirr'd

His tongue but could not speak ; then dash'd aside
 His chair as he arose, and loudly cried,
 " Liar and madman ! thou art he was seen
 Risking the fangs which thou hast rush'd between.
 Regorge the filth in thy detested throat."—
 And at the word, with his huge fist he smote
 Like iron on the place, then seiz'd him all,
 And dash'd in swoon against the bleeding wall.

Tw'as dusk :—he summon'd an old chieftain stern,
 Giving him charge of all till his return,
 And with one servant got to horse and rode
 All night, until he reach'd a lone abode
 Not far from the green bower. Next day at noon,
 Through a bye-way, free to himself alone,
 Alone he rode, yet ever in disguise,
 His hat pull'd over his assassin eyes,
 And coming through the wood, there left his horse,
 Then down amid the fruit-trees, half by force,
 Made way ; and by the summer house's door,
 Which he found shut, paus'd till a doubt was o'er.
 Paus'd, and gave ear. There was a low sweet voice :—
 The door was one that open'd without noise ;
 And opening it, he look'd within, and saw,
 Nought hearing, nought suspecting, not in awe
 Of one created thing in earth or skies,
 The lovers, interchanging words and sighs,
 Lost in the heaven of one another's eyes. }
 " To thee it was my father wedded me,"
 Francesca said :—" I never lov'd but thee.
 " The rest was ever but an ugly dream."—
 " Damn'd be the soul that says it," cried a scream.
 Horror is in the room,—shrieks,—roaring cries,
 Parryings of feeble palms,—blindly shut eyes :—
 What, without arms, avail'd grief, strength, despair ?
 Or what the two poor hands put forth in prayer ?
 Hot is the dagger from the brother's heart,
 Deep in the wife's :—dead both and dash'd apart.

Mighty the murderer felt as there they lay ;
 Mighty, for one huge moment, o'er his prey ;
 Then, like a drunken man, he rode away. }

To tell what horror smote the people's ears,
 The questionings, the amaze, the many tears,
 The secret household thoughts, the public awe.
 And how those ran back shrieking, that first saw
 The beauteous bodies lying in the place,
 Bloody and dead in midst of all their grace,
 Would keep too long the hideous deed in sight ;—
 Back was the slayer in his camp that night ;
 And fell next day with such a desperate sword
 Upon the rebel army at a ford,
 As sent the red news rolling to the sea,
 And steadied his wild nerves with victory.
 At court as usual then he re-appear'd,
 Fierce, but self-centred, willing to be fear'd ;
 Nor, saving once at a lone chamber-door,
 Utter'd he word of those now seen no more,
 Nor dull'd his dress, nor shunn'd the being seen,
 But look'd, talk'd, reign'd, as they had never been.

Nevertheless, his shame and misery still,
 Only less great than his enormous will,
 Darken'd his heart ; and in the cloud there hung,
 Like some small haunting knell for ever rung,
 Words which contain'd a dawning mystery,
 " It was to thee my father wedded me."
 The silence of his pride at length he broke,
 With handmaid then, and then with priest he spoke,
 And, sham'd beyond all former shame, yet rais'd
 From Jealousy's worst hell, his fancy gaz'd
 On the new scene that made his wrath less wild—
 The sire ensnaring his devoted child.
 Him foremost he beheld in all the past,
 And him he now ordain'd to gather all at last.

One dull day, therefore, from the palace-gate,
 A blast of trumpets blew, like voice of fate,

And all in sable clad forth came again
 A remnant of the former sprightly train,
 With churchmen intermixt ; and closing all,
 Was a blind hearse, hung with an ermined pall,
 And bearing on its top, together set,
 A prince's and princess's coronet.
 Simply they came along, amidst the sighs
 And tears of those who look'd with wondering eyes :
 Nor bell they had, nor choristers in white,
 Nor stopp'd, as most expected, within sight ;
 But pass'd the streets, the gates, the last abode,
 And tow'rd's Ravenna held their silent road.

Before it left, the Prince had sent swift word
 To the old Count of all that had occur'd :
 " And though I shall not " (so concluded he)
 Otherwise touch thine age's misery,
 Yet as I would that both one grave should hide,
 Which must and shall not be, where I reside,
 'Tis fit, though all have something to deplore,
 That he who join'd them first, should keep to part
 no more."

The wretched father, who, when he had read
 This letter, felt it wither his grey head,
 And ever since had pac'd about his room,
 Trembling, and seiz'd as with approaching doom,
 Had given such orders as he well could frame
 To meet devoutly whatsoever came ;
 And, as the news immediately took flight,
 Few in Ravenna slept throughout that night,
 But talk'd the business over, and review'd
 All that they knew of her, the fair and good ;
 And so with wond'ring sorrow, the next day,
 Waited till they should see that sad array.

The days were then at close of autumn,—still,
 A little rainy, and, towards nightfall, chill ;

But now there was a moaning air abroad ;
And ever and anon, over the road,
The last few leaves came fluttering from the trees,
Whose trunks, wet, bare, and cold, seem'd ill at ease.
The people, who, from reverence, kept at home,
Listen'd till afternoon to hear them come ;
And hour on hour went by, and nought was heard
But some chance horseman, or the wind that stirr'd,
Till tow'rds the vesper hour ; and then, 'twas said,
Some heard a voice, which seem'd as if it read ;
And others said, that they could hear a sound
Of many horses trampling the moist ground.
Still nothing came :—till on a sudden, just
As the wind open'd in a rising gust,
A voice of chaunting rose, and, as it spread,
They plainly heard the anthem for the dead.
It was the choristers, who went to meet
The train, and now were entering the first street.
Then turn'd aside that city, young and old,
And in their lifted hands the gushing sorrow roll'd.

Many a gentle spirit ill could bear
To keep the window, when the train drew near ;
And all felt double tenderness to see
The hearse approaching, slow and steadily,
In which those two in senseless coldness lay,
Who, not two brief years since,—it seem'd a day,—
Had left their walls, lovely in form and mind ;
In sunny manhood he,—she honour'd, fair, and kind.

HERO AND LEANDER.

CANTO I.

OLD is the tale I tell, and yet as young
And warm with life as ever minstrel sung :
Two lovers fill it,—two fair shapes—two souls
Sweet as the last, for whom the death-bell tolls :
What matters it how long ago, or where
They liv'd, or whether their young locks of hair,
Like English hyacinths, or Greek, were curl'd ?
We hurt the stories of the antique world
By thinking of our school-books, and the wrongs
Done them by pedants and fantastic songs,
Or sculptures, which from Roman "studios" thrown,
Turn back Deucalion's flesh and blood to stone.
Truth is for ever truth, and love is love ;
The bird of Venus is the living dove.
Sweet Hero's eyes, three thousand years ago,
Were made precisely like the best we know,
Look'd the same looks, and spoke no other Greek
Than eyes of honey-moons begun last week.
Alas ! and the dread shock that stunn'd her brow
Strain'd them as wide as any wretch's now.
I never think of poor Leander's fate,
And how he swam, and how his bride sat late,
And watch'd the dreadful dawning of the light,
But as I would of two that died last night.
So might they now have liv'd, and so have died ;
The story's heart, to me, still beats against its side.

Beneath the sun which shines this very hour,
There stood of yore—behold it now—a tow'r,

Half set in trees and leafy luxury,
 And through them look'd a window on the sea.
 The tow'r is old, but guards a beauteous scene
 Of bow'rs, 'twixt purple hills, a gulf of green,
 Whose farthest side, from out a lifted grove,
 Shows a white temple to the Queen of Love.
 Fair is the morn, the soft trees kiss and breathe ;
 Calm, blue, and glittering is the sea beneath ;
 And by the window a sweet maiden sits,
 Grave with glad thoughts, and watching it by fits :
 For o'er that sea, drawn to her with delight,
 Her love Leander is to come at night ;
 To come, not sailing, or with help of oar,
 But with his own warm heart and arms—no more—
 A naked bridegroom, bound from shore to shore. }

A priestess Hero is, an orphan dove,
 Lodg'd in that turret of the Queen of Love ;
 A youth Leander, born across the strait,
 Whose wealthy kin deny him his sweet mate,
 Beset with spies, and dogg'd with daily spite ;
 But he has made high compact with delight,
 And found a wondrous passage through the welter-
 ing night. }

So sat she fix'd all day, or now was fain
 To rise and move, then sighs, then sits again ;
 Then tries some work, forgets it, and thinks on,
 Wishing with perfect love the time were gone,
 And lost to the green trees with their sweet singers,
 Taps on the casement's ledge with idle fingers.

An aged nurse had Hero in the place,
 An under priestess of an humbler race,
 Who partly serv'd, partly kept watch and ward
 Over the rest, but no good love debarr'd.
 The temple's faith, though serious, never cross'd
 Engagements, miss'd to their exchequer's cost

And though this present knot was to remain
Unknown awhile, 'twas bless'd within the fane,
And much good thanks expected in the end
From the dear married daughter, and the wealthy
friend.

Poor Hero look'd for no such thanks. Her hand,
But to be held in his, would have giv'n sea and land.

The reverend crone accordingly took care
To do her duty to a time so fair,
Saw all things right, secur'd her own small pay,
(Which brought her luxuries to her dying day,)
And finishing a talk, which with surprise
She saw made grave e'en those good-humour'd eyes,
Laid up, tow'rd's night, her service on the shelf,
And left her nicer mistress to herself.

Hesper meanwhile, the star with amorous eye,
Shot his fine sparkle from the deep blue sky.
A depth of night succeeded, dark, but clear,
Such as presents the hollow starry sphere
Like a high gulf to heaven ; and all above
Seems waking to a fervid work of love.
A nightingale, in transport, seemed to fling
His warble out, and then sit listening :
And ever and anon, amidst the flush
Of the thick leaves, there ran a breezy gush ;
And then, from dewy myrtles lately bloom'd,
An odour small, in at the window, fumed.

At last, with twinkle o'er a distant tower,
A star appear'd, that was to show the hour.
The virgin saw ; and going to a room
Which held an altar burning with perfume,
Cut off a lock of her dark solid hair,
And laid it, with a little whisper'd prayer,
Before a statue, that of marble bright
Sat smiling downwards o'er the rosy light.

Then at the flame a torch of pine she lit,
 And o'er her head anxiously holding it,
 Ascended to the roof ; and leaning there,
 Lifted its light into the darksome air.

The boy beheld,—beheld it from the sea,
 And parted his wet locks, and breath'd with glee,
 And rose, in swimming, more triumphantly. }

Smooth was the sea that night, the lover strong,
 And in the springy waves he danced along.
 He rose, he dipp'd his breast, he aim'd, he cut
 With his clear arms, and from before him put
 The parting waves, and in and out the air
 His shoulders felt, and trail'd his washing hair ;
 But when he saw the torch, oh ! how he sprung,
 And thrust his feet against the waves, and flung
 The foam behind, as though he scorn'd the sea,
 And parted his wet locks, and breath'd with glee,
 And rose, and panted, most triumphantly ! }

Arriv'd at last on shallow ground, he saw
 The stooping light, as if in haste, withdraw ;
 Again it issued just above the door
 With a white hand, and vanished as before.
 Then rising, with a sudden-ceasing sound
 Of wateriness, he stood on the firm ground,
 And treading up a little slippery bank,
 With jutting myrtles mix'd, and verdure dank,
 Came to a door ajar,—all hush'd, all blind
 With darkness ; yet he guess'd who stood behind ;
 And entering with a turn, the breathless boy
 A breathless welcome finds, and words that die for
 joy.

CANTO II.

THUS pass'd the summer shadows in delight ;
 Leander came as surely as the night,
 And when the morning woke upon the sea,
 It saw him not, for back at home was he.
 Sometimes, when it blew fresh, the struggling flare
 Seem'd out ; but then he knew his Hero's care,
 And that she only wall'd it with her cloak ;
 Brighter again from out the dark it broke.
 Sometimes the night was almost clear as day,
 Wanting no torch ; and then, with easy play,
 He dipp'd along beneath the silver moon,
 Placidly hearkening to the water's tune.
 The people round the country, who from far
 Used to behold the light, thought it a star,
 Set there perhaps by Venus as a wonder,
 To mark the favourite maiden who slept under.
 Therefore they trod about the grounds by day
 Gently ; and fishermen at night, they say,
 With reverence kept aloof, cutting their silent way. }

But autumn now was over ; and the crane
 Began to clang against the coming rain,
 And peevish winds ran cutting o'er the sea,
 Which oft return'd a face of enmity.
 The gentle girl, before he went away,
 Would look out sadly toward the cold-eyed day,
 And often beg him not to come that night ;
 But still he came, and still she bless'd his sight ;
 And so, from day to day, he came and went,
 Till time had almost made her confident.

One evening, as she sat, twining sweet bay
 And myrtle garlands for a holiday,
 And watch'd at intervals the dreary sky,
 In which the dim sun held a languid eye,

She thought with such a full and quiet sweetness
 Of all Leander's love and his completeness,
 All that he was, and said, and look'd, and dared,
 His form, his step, his noble head full-haired,
 And how she lov'd him, as a thousand might,
 And yet he earn'd her still thus night by night,
 That the sharp pleasure mov'd her like a grief,
 And tears came dropping with their meek relief.

Meantime the sun had sunk ; the hilly mark,
 Across the straits, mix'd with the mightier dark,
 And night came on. All noises by degrees
 Were hush'd,—the fisher's call, the birds, the trees, }
 All but the washing of the eternal seas. }

Hero look'd out, and trembling, augur'd ill,
 The darkness held its breath so very still.
 But yet she hop'd he might arrive before
 The storm began, or not be far from shore ;
 And crying, as she stretch'd forth in the air,
 "Bless him !" she turn'd, and said a tearful prayer, }
 And mounted to the tower, and shook the torch's
 flare. }

But he, Leander, almost half across,
 Threw his blithe locks behind him with a toss,
 And hail'd the light victoriously, secure
 Of clasping his kind love, so sweet and sure ;
 When suddenly, a blast, as if in wrath,
 Sheer from the hills, came headlong on his path ;
 Then started off ; and driving round the sea,
 Dash'd up the panting waters roaringly.
 The youth at once was thrust beneath the main
 With blinded eyes, but quickly rose again,
 And with a smile at heart, and stouter pride,
 Surmounted, like a god, the rearing tide.
 But what ? The torch gone out ! So long too ! See
 He thinks it comes ! Ah, yes,—'tis she ! 'tis she !

Again he springs ; and though the winds arise
 Fiercer and fiercer, swims with ardent eyes ;
 And always, though with ruffian waves dash'd hard,
 Turns thither with glad groan his stout regard ;
 And always, though his sense seems wash'd away,
 Emerges, fighting tow'rds the cordial ray.

But driven about at last, and drench'd the while,
 The noble boy loses that inward smile :
 For now, from one black atmosphere, the rain
 Sweeps into stubborn mixture with the main ;
 And the brute wind, unmuffling all its roar,
 Storms ;—and the light, gone out, is seen no more.
 Then dreadful thoughts of death, of waves heaped
 on him,

And friends, and parting daylight, rush upon him.
 He thinks of prayers to Neptune and his daughters,
 And Venus, Hero's queen, sprung from the waters ;
 And then of Hero only,—how she fares,
 And what she'll feel, when the blank morn appears ;
 And at that thought he stiffens once again [vain.
 His limbs, and pants, and strains, and climbs,—in
 Fierce draughts he swallows of the wilful wave,
 His tossing hands are lax, his blind look grave,
 Till the poor youth (and yet no coward he) }
 Spoke once her name, and yielding wearily, }
 Wept in the middle of the scornful sea. }

I need not tell how Hero, when her light
 Would burn no longer, pass'd that dreadful night ;
 How she exclaim'd, and wept, and could not sit
 One instant in one place ; nor how she lit
 The torch a hundred times, and when she found
 'Twas all in vain, her gentle head turn'd round
 Almost with rage ; and in her fond despair
 She tried to call him through the deafening air.

But when he came not,—when from hour to hour
 He came not,—though the storm had spent its power,

And when the casement, at the dawn of light,
 Began to show a square of ghastly white,
 She went up to the tower, and straining out
 To search the seas, downwards, and round about,
 She saw, at last,—she saw her lord indeed
 Floating, and wash'd about, like a vile weed ;—
 On which such strength of passion and dismay
 Seiz'd her, and such an impotence to stay,
 That from the turret, like a stricken dove,
 With fluttering arms she leap'd, and join'd her
 drowned love.

THE PALFREY.

L'ENVOY.

TO HER, who loves all peaceful glory,
 Therefore laurell'd song and story ;
 Who, as blooming maiden should,
 Married blest, with young and good ;
 And whose rare zeal for healthy duties
 Set on horseback half our beauties ;
 Hie thee, little book, and say—
 (Blushing for leave unbegg'd alway ;
 And yet how beg it for one flower
 Cast in the path of Sovereign Power ?)
 Say that thy verse, though small it be,
 Yet mov'd by ancient minstrelsy
 To sing of youth escap'd from age,
 Scenes pleasant, and a Palfrey sage,
 And meditated, morn by morn,
 Among the trees where she was born,
 Dares come, on grateful memory's part,
 Not to Crown'd Head, but to Crown'd Heart.

THE following story is a variation of one of the most amusing
 of the old French narrative poems that preceded the time of

Chaucer, with additions of the writer's invention. The original, which he did not see till it was completed, is to be found in the collection of Messrs. Barbazan and Méon (*Fabliaux et Contes des Poètes François des 11, 12, 13, 14, et 15^e Siècles, &c.* (Edition 1808). His own originals were the prose abridgment of M. le Grand (*Fabliaux, &c.*, third edition, volume the fourth), and its imitation in verse by Messrs. Way and Ellis, inserted in the notes to the select translations from Le Grand by the former of those gentlemen.

The scene of the old story,—the only known production of a poet named Huon le Roi (possibly one of the “Kings of the Minstrels,” often spoken of at that period),—is laid in the province of Champagne; but as almost all the narrative poems under the title of *Lays* (of which this is one) are with good reason supposed to have had their source in the Greater or Lesser Britain—that is to say, either among the Welsh of this island, or their cousins of French Brittany, and as the only other local allusions in the poem itself are to places in England, the author has availed himself of the common property in these effusions claimed for the Anglo-Norman Muse,

“Begirt with British and Armorick knights,”

to indulge himself in a licence universal with the old minstrels, and lay the scene of his version where and when he pleased; to wit, during the reign of Edward the First, and in Kensington, Hendon, and their neighbourhoods,—old names, however new they sound. There is reason to believe, that the woody portions of Kensington, still existing as the Gardens, and in the neighbourhood of Holland House, are part of the ancient forest of Middlesex, which extended from this quarter to the skirts of Hertfordshire: and it is out of regard for these remnants of the old woods, and associations with them still more grateful, that I have placed the scene of my heroine's abode on the site of the existing palace, and the closing scene of the poem in the hall of the De Veres, Earls of Oxford, who had a mansion at that period in the grounds of the present Holland House, near the part called the Moats.

PART FIRST.

The palfrey goes, the palfrey goes
 Merrily well the palfrey goes ;
 He carrieth laughters, he carrieth woes,
 Yet merrily ever the palfrey goes.

'Tis June, and a bright sun burneth all.
 Sir William hath gallop'd from Hendon Hall
 To Kensington, where in a thick old wood
 (Now its fair Gardens) a mansion stood,
 Half like fortress, and half like farm, [harm.
 A house which had ceas'd to be threaten'd with
 The gates frown'd still, for the dignity's sake,
 With porter, portcullis, and bit of a lake ;
 But ivy caress'd their warm old ease,
 And the young rooks chuckled across the trees, }
 And burning below went the golden bees. }
 The spot was the same, where on a May morn
 The Rose that toppeth the world was born.

Sir William hath gallop'd, and well was bent
 His palfrey to second a swift intent ;
 And yet, having come, he delayeth his knock.
 E'en though a sweet maiden counteth the clock
 Till she meet his eye from behind the chair,
 Where sitteth Sir Guy with his old white hair.
 But the youth is not rich ; and day by day
 Sir Guy groweth cold, and hath less to say,
 And daunteth his wit with *haws* and *hums*,
 Coughing with grandeur, and twirling his thumbs,
 Till visiting turneth to shame and gall,
 And Sir William must speak what endangereth all.

Now for any deed else, in love or in war,
 Knight bolder was none than the knight De la Barre

(So styled by the King, from a traitor tall,
Whom he pitch'd over barriers, armour and all) ;
Short distance made he betwixt point and hilt ;
He was not a man that at tourney and tilt
Sat bowing to every fair friend he could spy,
Or bearing his fame with a fine cold eye :
A hundred sweet eyes might be watching his own ;
He thought but of two, and of steeds to be thrown :
And the trumpets no sooner blew might to might,
Than crash went his onset and down went knights.

And thus in his love for sweet Anne de Paul,
Though forc'd to some stealths, 'twas honest withal :
He wooed, though the old man ever was by,
With talk such as fixeth a maiden's eye,
With lore and with legends, earnest of heart,
And an art that applied them, sprung out of no art,
Till stealth for his sake seem'd truth's own right,
And at an old casement long clos'd, one night,
Through boughs never dry, in a pathless nook,
Love's breathless delight in his vows she took.
Ah ! never thenceforth, by sunniest brook,
Did the cheeks of the cherry-trees beat the look
Of the poor-growing stems in the pathless nook. }

But, alas ! to plead love unto loving eyes,
And to beg for its leave of the worldly wise,
All humility sweet on the one side lies,
And all on the other that mortifies.

Sir William hath swallow'd a sigh at last,
Big as his heart ; and the words have pass'd :
“ I love your daughter, Sir Guy,” quoth he,
“ And though I'm not rich, yet my race may be ;
A race with a scutcheon as old as the best,
Though its wealth lies at Acre in holy rest.
Mine uncle, your friend, so blithe and old,
Hath nobody nigher to leave his gold :

The King hath been pleas'd to promise my sword
 The picking of some great Frenchman's hoard ;
 And sire, meantime, should not blush for wife ;
 Soft as her hand should fare her life ;
 My rents, though small, can support her state,
 And I'd fight for the rest till I made them great.
 Vouchsafe to endure that I seek her love :
 I know she resembles the blest above ;
 Her face would paint sweeter a monarch's bower,
 Though glory and grace were in every flower ;
 But angels on monarchs themselves look down,
 And love is to love both coffer and crown."

Sir William ended, he scarce knew why,
 (But 'twas pity of self, to move pity thereby),
 With a sad, perchance with an abject sigh,
 And stoop'd and kiss'd the hand of Sir Guy :
 Steady and sharp was the old man's eye.

"Sir William, no doubt, is a bold young knight,"
 Quoth he, "and my daughter a beauty bright ;
 And a beauty bright and a bold young man
 Have suited, I wot, since the world began.
 But the man that is bold and hath money beside,
 Cometh best arm'd for a beauteous bride.
 The court will be riding this way next week,
 To honour the Earl's fat chimney reek ;
 And softly will many a bold bright eye
 Fall on the face no face comes nigh.
 You speak of mirth, and you speak of age,
 Not in a way very civil or sage.
 Your kinsman, the friend whom you call so old,
 But ten years less than myself hath told :
 And I count not this body so ancient still,
 As to warrant green years to talk of my will.
 Let him come if he please (I shall greet the friend)
 And show me which way his leavings tend,
 And then we can parley of courtings best :
 Till when I advise you to court his chest."

Sir William he boweth as low as before,
 And after him closeth the soft room door,
 And he moaneth a moan, and half staggereth he ;
 He doubteth which way the stairs may be.
 But the lower his bow, and the deeper his moan,
 The redder the spot in his cheek hath grown,
 And he loatheth the kiss to the hard old hand.

“ May the devil,” thought he, “ for his best new
 Pluck it, and strike to his soul red-hot ! [brand,
 Why scorn me, and mock me ? and why, like a sot,
 Must I stoop to him, low as his own court-plot ?
 Will any one tell us,—will Nature declare,—
 How father so foul can have daughter so fair ?
 But her mother of angels dreamt in her sorrow,
 And hence came this face,—this dimpled May-mor-
 [row.”

And as he thought thus, from a door there stole
 A hand in a tremble, a balm to his soul ;
 And soft though it trembled, it close wrung his,
 And with it a letter ;—and gone it is.

Sir William hath dash'd in the forest awhile,
 His being seems all a hasty smile :
 And there, by green light and the cooing of doves,
 He readeth the letter of her he loves,
 And kisseth and readeth again and again ;
 His bridle is dropp'd on his palfrey's mane,
 Who turneth an ear, and then, wise beast,
 Croppeth the herbage,—a prudent feast :
 For Sir William no sooner hath read nine times,
 Than he deemeth delay the worst of crimes :
 He snatcheth the bridle, and shakes it hard,
 And is off for his life on the loud green sward ;
 He foameth up steep, and he hisseth in stream,
 And saluteth his uncle like one in a dream.

“ Sir William, Sir William, what chase is this ?
 Have you slain a fat buck, or stolen a kiss ;

And is all the world, on account of his wife,
After poor dripping Sir William's life !”

“Most honour'd of kinsmen,” Sir William cried
“Nought have I stolen, but hope of a bride ;
Her father, no Christian like her, but a Jew,
Would make me refund ; which grieveth her too.
You know who she is ; but have yet to know,
What a rose in the shade of that rock could grow ;
What fulness of beauty on footstalk light ;
What a soul for sweet uncle to love at sight.
Ah ! Sir, she loveth your own blithe fame,
And dareth, she saith, in your sister's name
Entreat me the loan of some fields of corn,
Which her dowry shall buy on the bridal morn.
I blush, dear uncle ; I drop mine eye-lids ;
Yet who should blush when a lady bids ?
'Tis lending me bliss ; 'tis lending me life ;
And she'll kiss you withal, saith the rosy wife.”

“Ah, ha !” quoth Sir Grey, with his twinkling
“The lass, I see, is both merry and wise ; [eyes :
I call her to mem'ry, an earnest child,
Now looking straight at you, now laughing wild :
'Tis now—let me see—five long years ago,
And that's a good time for such buds to blow.
Well,—dry your outside, and moisten your in ;
This wine is a bud of my oldest bin ;
And we'll talk of the dowry, and talk of the day
And see if her bill be good, boy, eh ?”

Sir Grey did n't say, You're my sister's son,
I have left you my gold, and your work is done —
He hated to speak of his gold, like death ;
And he lov'd a good bill as he lov'd his breath ;
And yet, for all that, Sir Grey, I trow,
Was a very good man, as corn-dealers go.

So the lover hath seiz'd the new old hand,
And kiss'd it, as though it had given the land,

And invok'd on its bounty such bliss from above,
Thought he, "Of a truth, I *am* mean in love."
But free was his fervor from any such vice ;
For when obligation's more fitting than nice,
We double the glow of our thanks and respect,
To hide from th' obliger his own defect.

"That palfrey of thine's a good palfrey, Will ;
He holdeth his head up, and danceth still,
And trippeth as light by the ostler's side,
As though just saddled to bear your bride ;
And yet, by Saint Richard, as drench'd is he
And as froth'd as though just out of the sea :
Methinks I hear him just landed free,
Shaking him and his saddle right thunderously.
And he starteth at nothing ?"

"No more than the wall."

"And is sure of his footing ?"

"As monarch in hall."

He's a thunder in fight, and a thief on the road,
So swiftly he speedeth whatever his load :
Yet round the wolf's den half a day will he hover,
And carrying a lady, takes heed like a lover."
"And therefore Sir William will part with him
"Nay, uncle, he will ;—for ever and ever." [never ?"
"And what such a jewel may purchase, I pray ?"
"Thanks, thanks, dearest uncle, and not saying Nay.
Now prythee deny me not grace so small :
The palfrey in truth is comely withal,
And you still shall lend him to bear my bride ;
But whom, save our help, should he carry beside ?"

"I'm vex'd."

"For pity."

"I'm griev'd."

"Now pray."

"'Tis cheap," thought the uncle, "this not saying
[Nay."

PART SECOND.

The palfrey goes, the palfrey goes,
 Merrily ever the palfrey goes ;
 Nought he carrieth now but woes,
 And yet full well the palfrey goes.

SIR Grey and Sir Guy, like proper old boys,
 Have met, with a world of coughing and noise ;
 And after subsiding, judiciously dine,
 Serious the venison, and chirping the wine.
 They talk of the court, now gathering all
 To the sunny plump smoke of Earl-Mount Hall :
 And pity their elders laid up on the shelves,
 And abuse every soul upon earth but themselves :
 Only Sir Grey doth it rather to please,
 And Sir Guy out of honest old spite and disease :
 For Sir Guy hath a face so round and so red,
 The whole of his blood seemeth hanging his head,
 While Sir Grey's red face is waggish and thin,
 And he peereth with upraised nose and chin.

Nathless Sir Grey excepteth from blame
 His nephew Sir Will, and his youthful fame ;
 And each soundeth t'other, to learn what hold
 The youth and the lady may have of his gold.
 Alas ! of his gold will neither speak, [weak ;
 Tho' the wine it grew strong, and the tongue grew
 And when the sweet maiden herself appears,
 With a breath in her bosom, and blush to her ears,
 And the large thankful eyes of the look of a bride,
 Sir Grey recollecteth no creature beside :
 He watcheth her in, he watcheth her out ;
 He measureth her ankle, but not with his gout ;
 He chucketh, like chanticleer over a corn,
 And thinks it but forty years since he was born.

“ Why, how now, Sir Grey ? methinks you grow young :
How soon are your own wedding bells to be rung ?
You stare on my daughter, like one elf-struck.”

“ Alas ! and I am,—the sadder my luck :—
Albeit, Sir Guy, your own shoulders count
Years not many more than mine own amount,
And I trust you don’t feign to be too old to wed ?”

“ Hoh ! hoh !” quoth Sir Guy ; “ that was cunningly said.”
(Yet he felt flatter’d too, did the white old head.)

“ What *are* years ?” continued Sir Grey, looking bold.
“ There are men never young, and men never old.
Old and young lips may carol in tune ;
Green laugheth the oak ’gainst the brown mid June.
Lo ! dapper Sir Kit, with his large young wife ;
His big-legged babes are the pride of his life.”

Sir Guy shook his head.

“ And the stout old lord,
Whose wife sitteth front him so meek at his board.”

“ Ay, ay,” quoth Sir Guy, “ and stuffeth so fast,
His eyesight not reaching the lady’s repast.”

“ Well, well,” quoth Sir Grey—
“ Ill, ill,” quoth Sir Guy ;
“ The children of old men full well I descry ;
They look, by Saint Christendom ! old as themselves ;
Are dwarf’d ; are half wither’d ; they grin like elves.”

“ They may,” quoth Sir Grey, “ when both parents are old,
Or when the old parent is wrinkle-soul’d ;

But not when he's hearty and merry as we.
 You grieve me, Sir Guy. Oh! 'tis doleful to see
 How vainly a friend may come here for a bride,
 Though he loveth the daughter, and father beside."

"Your pardon, your pardon, dear friend," crieth
 Guy:

What, you? What, Sir Grey with his ever-bright eye?
 We talk'd of the old, but who talk'd of Sir Grey?
 But speak ye right soberly? mean what ye say?"

"Ay, truly I do," with a sigh crieth Grey;
 "As truly as souls that for Paradise pray. [Anne,
 And hark ye, dear friend; you'll miss your sweet
 If she weddeth, I wot, some giddy young man.
 He'll bear her away, and be lov'd alone,
 And wish, and yet grudge, your very tomb-stone.
 Now give her to me, I'll give her my gold,
 And I'll give to yourself my wood and my wold,
 And come and live here, and we'll house together,
 And laugh o'er our cups at the winter weather."

"A bargain! a bargain!" cried old Sir Guy,
 With a stone at his heart, and the land in his eye;
 "Your hand to the bargain, my dear old friend:
 My 'old' did I call thee? My world without end.
 I'll bustle her straight; and to keep all close,
 You shall carry her with you, ere creature knows,
 Save Rob, and Sir Rafe, and a few beside,
 For guests and for guards to the travelling bride;
 And so, ere the chattering court come down,
 Wed her at home in your own snug town."

Now a murrain, I say, on those foul old men!
 I never, myself, shall see fifty again,
 And can pity a proper young-blooded old fellow,
 Whose heart is green, though his cheek be yellow;
 For Nature, albeit she never doth wrong,
 Yet seemeth in such to keep youth too long:

And 'tis grievous when such an one seeth his bliss
 In a face which can see but the wrinkles in his.
 Ah ! pray let him think there are dames not young,
 For whom the bells yet might be handsomely rung.
 'Tis true, grey-beards *have* been, like Jove's of old,
 That have met a young lip, nor been thought too bold.
 In Norfolk a wondrous old lord hath been seen,
 Who at eighty was not more than forty, I ween ;
 And I myself know a hale elderly man,
 In face and in frolic a very god Pan.
 But marvels like these are full rare, I wis ;
 And when elders in general young ladies would kiss,
 I exhort the dear souls to fight and to flee,
 Unless they should chance to run against me.

Alas ! I delay as long as I can,
 For who may find words for thy grief, sweet Anne?
 'Tis hard when young heart, singing songs of to-
 Is suddenly met by the old hag, Sorrow. {morrow,
 She fainteth, she prayeth, she feeleth sore ill ;
 She wringeth her hands ; she cannot stand still ; }
 She tasteth the madness of wonder and will ;— }
 Nor, sweet though she was, had she yielded at last,
 Had Sir Guy not his loathly old plethora cast
 In the scale against love and its life-long gains,
 And threaten'd her fears for his bursting veins.
 " I 'll wed him," she wrote to Sir William ;—" yes ;
 But nothing on earth—" and here her distress
 Broke away, and she wept, and the tears fell hot
 On the paper, and made a great starry blot.
 Alas ! tears and letter burn under the eye
 Of watchful, unmerciful, old Sir Guy ;
 And so on a night, when all things round,
 Save the trees and the moon, were sleeping sound,
 From his casement in shadow he sees his child,
 Bent in her weeping, yet alway mild,
 The fairest thing in the moon's fair ray,
 Borne like some bundle of theft away ;

Borne by a horde of old thieves away,
The guests and the guards of false Sir Grey.

She pray'd, but she spake out aloud no word ;
She wept, but no breath of self-pity was heard :
Her woe was a sight for no dotards to see ;
And yet not bereft of all balm was she ;
One balm there was left her, one strange but rare, }
Nay, one in the shape of a very despair ; }
To wit, the palfrey that wont to bear }
The knight De la Barre on his daily way }
To her, and love, and false Sir Grey. }
Him it had borne, her now it bore ; }
And weeping sweet, though more and more, }
And praying for its master's bliss }
(Oh ! no true love will scoff at this), }
She stoop'd, and gave its neck a kiss. }

PART THIRD.

The palfrey goes, the palfrey goes,
Merrily still the palfrey goes ;
He goes a path he never chose,
Yet still full well the palfrey goes.

COULD the sweet moon laugh, its light
Had surely been convuls'd that night,
To see fifteen old horsemen wag
Their beards, to one poor maiden's nag ;
Fifteen old beards in chat and cough,
Rumbling to keep the robbers off,
And ever and aye, when lanes grew close,
Following each the other's nose,
And with the silver beam she cast
Tipp'd, like every tree they pass'd.
The owls they seem'd to hoot their folly
With a staring melancholy.

After jealous sort, I wis,
 Cull'd Sir Grey these guests of his
 Not a soul so young as he
 Gracing all his chivalry :
 Six there were, of toothless fame,
 With each his man, of jaws as tame ;
 Then his own, the palsiest there ;
 And last, Sir Guy's, with whitest hair :
 And each had snugg'd him for the night
 In old flapp'd hat, and cap as white,
 In double cloak, and three-fold hose,
 Besides good drink to warm his toes,
 And so they jog it, beard and nose,
 And in the midst the palfrey goes ;
 Oh ! ever well the palfrey goes ;
 He knows within him what he knows,
 And so, full well the palfrey goes.

But in his hamlet hous'd apart,
 How far'd, meantime, Sir William's heart ?
 Oh, when the sun first went to bed,
 Not richer look'd the sun's own head,
 Nor cast a more all-gladdening eye :
 He seem'd to say, " My heav'n is nigh."

For he had heard of rare delights
 Between those two old feasting knights,
 And of a pillion, new and fair,
 Ordain'd to go some road as rare ;
 With whom ? For what sweet rider's art ?
 Whose, but the dancer's at his heart,
 The light, the bright, yet balmy she,
 And who shall fetch her home but he ?
 Who else be summon'd speedily
 By the kind uncle full of glee
 To fetch away that ecstasy ?
 So, ever since that news, his ear,
 Listening with a lofty fear,
 Lest it catch one sound too late,
 Stood open, like a palace gate

That waits the bride of some great king,
Heard with her trumpets travelling.
At length a letter. Whose? Sir Guy's,
The father's own. With reverent eyes,
With heart, impatient to give thanks,
And tears that top their glimmering banks,
He opens, reads, turns pale as death;
His noble bosom gasps for breath:
His Anne has left his love for gold,
But in her kindness manifold
Extorted from his uncle's hoard
Enough to leave him bed and board.
Ah! words like those were never Anne's;
Too plainly they the coarse old man's;
But still the letter; still the fact;
With pangs on pangs his heart is rack'd.
Love is an angel; has no pride;
She'll mourn his love when he has died:
Yet love is truth; so hates deceit;
He'll pass and scorn her in the street.
Now will he watch her house at night
For glimpse of her by some brief light,
Such as perhaps his own pale face
May show: and then he'll quit the place.
Now he will fly her, hate, detest,
Mock; make a by-word and a jest:
Then he hates hate; and who so low
As strike a woman's fame? No, no;
False love might spite the faithless Anne,
But true was aye the gentleman.
Thus paceth he, 'twixt calm and mad,
Till the mid-watch, his chamber sad;
And then lies down in his day-dress,
And sleeps for very weariness,
Catching and starting in his moan,
And waking with a life-long groan.
Sometimes he dreams his sorrow makes
Such weeping wail, that, as he wakes,

He lifts his pitying hand to try
His cheek, and wonders it is dry.
Sometimes his virgin bride and he
Are hous'd for the first time, and free
To dwell within each other's eyes ;
And then he wakes with woful cries.
Sometimes he hears her call for aid ;
Sometimes beholds her bright arrayed,
But pale, and with her eyes on earth ;
And once he saw her pass in mirth,
And look at him, nor eye let fall,
And that was wofull'st dream of all.
At length he hears, or thinks he hears,—
(Or dreams he still with waking ears ?)
A tinkle of the house's bell !
What news can midnight have to tell ?
He listens. No. No sound again.
The breeze hath stirr'd the window-pane ;
Perchance it was the tinkling glass ;
Perchance 'twas his own brain, alas !
His own weak brain, which hears the blood
Pulse at his ears,—a tingling flood,
Strange mantler in as strange a cup.
Yet hark again !—he starts ; leans up ;
It seems to fear to wake a mouse,
That sound ;—then peals, and wakes the house.

But first, to end what I began,
The journey of sweet houseless Anne.

PART FOURTH.

The palfrey goes, the palfrey goes,
 Merry and well the palfrey goes ;
 You cannot guess till time disclose,
 How perfectly well the palfrey goes.

AH ! dream Sir William what he might,
 Little he dreamt the truth that night.
 Could but some friend have told him all,
 How had he spurr'd from Hendon Hall,
 And dash'd among the doting set,
 Who bore away that soft cheek wet !
 How had the hills by which they go,
 Re-echo'd to his dire "Hallo !"
 Startling the waking farmers' ears
 With thoughts of thieves and murderers,
 And scattering wide those owlish men,
 While close he clasp'd his dove again.
 But where I left them, safe go they,
 Their drowsy noses droop'd alway
 To meet the beard's attractive nest,
 Push'd upwards from the muffled breast.
 Drowsy they nod, and safe they go ;
 Sir Grey's good steeds the country know,
 And lead the rest full soft and well,
 Till snore on snore begins to swell,
 Warm as owl-plumage, toned as bell ;
 True snores, composed of spices fine,
 Supper, fresh air, and old mull'd wine.
 At first they wake with start and fright,
 And sniff and stare with all their might,
 And sit, one moment, bolt upright :
 But soon reverts each nodding crown ;
 It droops, it yields, it settles down ;
 Till in one snore, sincere and deep,
 The whole grave train are fast asleep.

Sir Grey, the youngest, yields the last :
 Besides, he held two bridles fast,
 The lady's palfrey having shown
 Much wish to turn up lanes unknown.
 Even sweet Anne can war not long
 With sleep, the gentle and the strong ;
 And as the fingers of Sir Grey
 By fine degrees give dulcet way,
 And leave the happy beast his will,
 The only creatures waking still
 And free to go where fancy leads,
 Are the twice eight bit-mumbling steeds.
 Some few accordingly turn round,
 Their happy memories homeward bound,
 And soon awake their jolted lords,
 Who bless themselves from bandit hordes,
 And thinking they have only lagg'd,
 Are willingly half jellybagg'd.
 The rest,—the palfrey meek as any,—
 Jog still onward with the many ;
 Passing now by Kilburn rill,
 And now by Hampstead's leaf-stirr'd hill,
 Which lulls them still as they descend
 The sylvan trough of sweet North-end,
 And till they reach thy plot serene
 And bowery granges, Golders-Green.

Now Golders-Green had then a road
 (The same as that just re-bestow'd)
 Which cross'd the main road, and went straight
 To Finchley, and Sir Grey's own gate ;
 And thither (every sleeper still
 Depending on his horse's will),
 Thither, like sheep, turns every head
 That follows where the sagest led,—
 All but the palfrey's. He, good beast,
 From his new master's clutch releas'd,
 And longing much his old to see,
 His stalls, and all his bounty free

(For poor Sir William's household ways
Were nobler than the rich Sir Grey's),
Goes neither to the right nor left,
But straight as honesty from theft,
Straight as the dainty to the tooth,
Straight as his lady's love and truth,
Straight for the point, the best of all,
Sir William's arms and Hendon Hall.

Not far from where we left them all,
Those steeds and sires, was Hendon Hall,
Some twice nine hundred yards or so ;
And steeds to stables quickly go.
The lady wakes with the first start ;
She cries aloud ; she cowers at heart ;
And looks around her in affright
On the wide, lonely, homeless night ;
Then checks, as sharply as she may
(Not yet aware how blest his way),
Her eager friend ; and nighly faints,
And calls on fifty gentle saints,
And, if she could, would close her eyes,
For fear of thieves and sorceries,
Of men all beard and blood, and calls
Over lone fields, and lighted palls,
And elves that ever, as you go,
Skip at your side with mop and mow,
With gibbering becks and moony stares,
Forcing your eyes to look on theirs.

And see ! the moon forsakes the road ;
She lifts her light to whence it flow'd :
Has she a good or ill bestow'd,
That thus her light forsakes the road ?
The owls they hoot with gloomier cry ;
They seem to see a murder nigh :
And how the palfrey snorts and pulls !
Now Mary help poor wandering fools !

The palfrey pulls, and he must go ;
 The lady's hand may not say No.
 And go he does ; the palfrey goes ;
 He carrieth now no longer woes ;
 For she, e'en she, now thinks she knows,
 Sweet Anne begins to think she knows
 Those gathering huts, those poplar rows,
 That water, falling as it flows,
 This bridge o'er which the palfrey goes,
 This gate, at which he stops, and shows
 His love to it with greeting nose.
 Ah ! surely recollects she well
 All she has heard her lover tell
 Of this same gate, and that same bell :
 And she it was, you guess full well,
 That pull'd, and pull'd again, that bell ;
 And down her love has come pell-mell
 With page, and squire, and all who ran,
 And was the first to find his Anne,—
 Was a most mad and blissful man,
 Claspings his fainting, faithful Anne.

PART FIFTH.

The palfrey goes, the palfrey goes ;
 His work is done, you may suppose.
 No :—double burden now he knows,
 Yet well for ever the palfrey goes.

THE bells in many a giddy ring
 Run down the wind to greet the King,
 Who comes to feast, for service done,
 With Earl De Vere at Kensington,
 And brings with him his constant grace
 Queen Eleanor, that angel's face.

In many-footed order free
 First ride his guards, all staid to see ;

In midst of whom the trumpets blow,
 Straight as power and glory go ;
 And then his lords and knights, each one
 A manly splendour in the sun ;
 And then his lofty self appears,
 Calmer for the shouts he hears,
 With his Queen the courteous-eyed,
 Like strength and sweetness side by side ;
 And thus, his banner steering all,
 Rides the King to Earl-Mount Hall.

Meantime, ere yet the sovereign pair
 Were threading London's closer air,
 An humbler twain, heart-link'd as they,
 Were hearing larks and scenting hay,
 And coming, too, to Earl-Mount Hall
 Through many a green lane's briery wall,
 Many a brier and many a rose,
 And merrily ever the palfrey goes,
 Merrily though he carrieth two,
 And one hath sometimes great ado
 To sit while o'er the ruts he goes,
 Nor clasp the other doubly close,
 Who cannot chuse but turn, and then—
 Why, if none see, he clasps again.
 " Ah," thinks the lady, as she looks
 Through tears and smiles with half-rebukes,
 " Ah, *must* my father break his heart ?
 For surely now we never part."

Behind, some furlong off, and 'twixt
 Those winding oaks with poplars mix'd,
 Come two upon a second steed,
 Male, too, and female ; not indeed
 The female young and fair as t' other :
 She is the page's honour'd mother.
 Much talk they on the road ;—at least
 Much talks the mother ; while the beast

Pulls at the hedges as he goes,
 Pricking oft his tossing nose ;
 And the page, though listening, sees
 Newts in the brooks and nests in trees.
 Lastly a hound, tongue-lolling, courses
 To and fro 'twixt both the horses,
 Giving now some weasel chase,
 And loving now his master's face,
 And so, with many a turn and run,
 Goes twenty furlongs to their one.

This riding double was no crime
 In the first great Edward's time ;
 No brave man thought himself disgrac'd
 By two fair arms about his waist ;
 Nor did the lady blush vermilion,
 Dancing on the lover's pillion.
 Why ? Because all modes and actions
 Bow'd not then to Vulgar Fractions ;
 Nor were tested all resources
 By the power to purchase horses.

Many a steed yet won had he,
 Our lover in his chivalry ;
 For, in sooth, full half his rents
 Were ransoms gain'd in tournaments ;
 But all, save these, were gone at present.—
 Ah ! the green lane still was pleasant.

Hope was theirs. For one sweet hour
 Did they, last night, in bliss devour
 Each other's questions, answers, eyes,
 Nor ever for divine surprise
 Could take a proper breath, much less
 The supper brought in hastiness
 By the glad little gaping page ;
 While rose meantime his mother sage
 To wait upon the lady sweet,
 And snore discreetly on the seat

In the oriel of the room,
 Whence gleam'd her night-cap through the gloom.
 Then parted they to lie awake
 For transport, spite of all heart-ache :
 For heaven's in any roof that covers,
 Any one same night, two lovers ;
 They may be divided still ;
 They may want, in all but will ;
 But they know that each is there,
 Each just parted, each in prayer ;
 Each more close, because apart,
 And every thought clasp'd heart to heart.

Alas ! in vain their hearts agree ;
 Good must seem good, as well as be ;
 And lest a spot should stain his flower
 For blushing in a brideless bower,
 Sir William with the lark must rise,
 And bear,—but whither bear ?—his prize
 Not to Sir Grey's, for that were scorn ;
 Not to Sir Guy's, to live forlorn ;
 Not to some abbey's jealous care,
 For Heaven would try to wed her there ;
 But to a dame that served the Queen,
 His aunt, and no mean dame, I ween,—
 A dame of rank, a dame of honour,
 A dame (may earth lie green upon her !)
 That felt for nature, love, and truth,
 And hated old age pawing youth :
 One that at no time held wrong right,
 Yet somehow took a dear delight
 By secret measures, sweet and strong,
 In giving right a zest of wrong.
 To her Sir William brings his Anne
 Three hours before the feast began,
 But first has sent his page to spy
 How day has dawn'd with old Sir Guy.
 The page scarce vanish'd, re-appears,
 His eyes wide open as their ears,

And tells how all the beards are there !
 All ;—every mump of quivering hair,
 Come back with groan, and back with stare,
 To set Sir Guy upon the rack,
 And find the lady *not* come back. }

“ Now God bless all their groans and stares,
 And eke their most irreverend hairs ! ”
 Cries the good dame, the Lady Maud,
 Laughing with all her shoulders broad :—
 “ My budget bursteth sure with this !
 This were a crowning galliardise
 For king himself to tell in hall,
 Against his lords’ wit groweth small.”
 And rustling in her vestments broad,
 Forth sails the laughing Lady Maud
 To tell the King and tell the Queen ;
 But first she kiss’d sweet Anne between
 The sighing lips and downcast eyes,
 And said, “ Old breaking hearts are lies.”

Three hours have come, three hours have gone ;
 King Edward, with his crownnet on,
 Sits highest where the feast is set ;
 With wine the sweetest lips are wet ;
 The music makes a heaven above,
 And underneath is talk of love.

The King look’d out from where he sat,
 And cried “ Sir Guy de Paul ! ” Thereat
 The music stopped with awe and wonder,
 Like discourse when speaks the thunder ;
 And the feasters, one and all,
 Gazed upon Sir Guy de Paul.

“ How chanceth it, Sir Guy de Paul,
 Your daughter graceth not the call
 To the feast at Earl-Mount Hall ? }

My friends here boast her like the Queen :
What maketh such a face unseen ?”

“ Sir,” quoth Sir Guy, “ a loyal breast
Hath brought a man here sore distress’d.
My daughter, through device, ’tis fear’d,
Of some false knight, hath disappear’d.”

“ Hah !” quoth the King, “ since when, I pray ?
They tell me, ’twas but yesterday
That she was mark’d, for two long hours,
Praying behind her window-flowers.”

“ Alas ! Sir, ’twas at night.—Forgive
My failing speech. I scarcely live
Till I have sought her, high and low,
And know, what then the King shall know.”

“ Now God confound all snares, and bring
Base hearts to sorrow !” cried the King ;
“ Myself will aid thee, and full soon.
Ho ! master bard, good Rafe de Boon,
Pinch thy fair harp, and make it tell
Of those old thieves who slept so well.”

The minstrel bowed with blushing glee ;
His harp into his arms took he,
And rous’d its pulses to a mood
Befitting love and hardihood.
Then, with his ready wit sincere,
He sang to every tingling ear,
How fifteen brave old beards, one night,
Bore off one lady in a fright ;
With what amazing knees they kept
Their saddles, and how fiercely slept ;
And how a certain palfrey chose
To leave them to their proud repose,
And through the wildering night-time bear
The lady to her lover’s care.

He named no names, he drew no face,
 Yet not a soul mistook the case ;
 Till by degrees, boards, tap'stries, rafters,
 Echoed the King's and feasters' laughers ;
 And once again, all Earl-Mount Hall
 Gazed upon Sir Guy de Paul.

But how the laughter raged and scream'd,
 When lo ! those fifteen beards all stream'd
 In at the great door of the hall !
 Those very grey-beards, one and all,
 By the King's command in thrall,
 All mounted, and all scar'd withal,
 And scarlet as Sir Guy de Paul !
 By heavens ! 'twas " merry in the hall,"
 When every beard but those " wagg'd all."

Out spoke the King with wrathful breath,
 Smiting the noise as still as death ;
 " Are these the suitors to destroy
 My projects with new tales of Troy ?
 These the bold knights and generous lords
 To wed our heiresses and wards ?
 Now, too, while Frenchman and while Scot
 Have cost us double swords, God wot !
 Are these replenishers of nations ?
 Begetters of great generations ?
 Out with them all ! and bring to light
 A fitter and a fairer sight."

Queen Eleanor glanc'd down the hall,
 She pitied old Sir Guy de Paul,
 Who, while these doters went their way,
 Knew neither how to go nor stay,
 But sate bent close, his shame to smother,
 Rubbing one hand upon the other.
 A page she sent him, bright and mild,
 Who led him forth, like his own child.

Out went the beards by a side door ;
 The great one roll'd apart once more,
 And, as the King had given command,
 In rode a couple, hand in hand,
 Who made the stillness stiller :—he }
 A man to grace all jeopardy ; }
 And all a lovely comfort, she. }
 The stalwart youth bestrode a steed,
 A Barbary, the King's own breed ;
 The lady grac'd her palfrey still,
 Sweet beast, that ever hath his will,
 And paceth now beside his lord,
 Straight for the King at the high board,
 Till sharp the riders halt, and wait
 The speaking of the crowned state,—
 The knight with reverential eyes,
 Whose grateful hope no claim implies :
 The lady in a bashful glow,
 Her bosom billowing to and fro.

“ Welcome ! Sir William de la Barre,”
 The monarch cried ; “ a right good star
 For ladies' palfreys led astray ;
 And welcome his fair flower of May.
 By heavens ! I will not have my knights
 Defrauded of their lady rights.
 I give thee, William de la Barre,
 For this thy bride, and that thy scar
 Won from the big-limb'd traitor Pole,
 The day thou dash'dst out half his soul
 And lett'st his ransom free, for ruth
 (For which thou wert a foolish youth),
 All those good meadows, lately his,
 Down by the Brent, where thy hall is,
 And all my rights in that same hall,
 Together with the osieries all
 That skirt the streams by down and dale,
 From Hendon into Perivale.

And now dismount. And hark ye, there,
Sir Priest, my chaplain Christopher,
(See how the honest body dries
The tears of claret in his eyes!)—
Come and betroth these friends of mine,
Till at the good Earl's chapel shrine
Thy holy magic make them one :
The King and Queen will see it done.
But first a royal health to all
The friends we leave in this fair hall ;
And may all knights' and ladies' horses
Take, like the palfrey, vigorous courses !”

With princely laughter rose the King,
Rose all, the laughter echoing,
Rose the proud wassail, rose the shout
By the trumpets long stretch'd out ;
You would have thought that roof and all
Rose in that heart-lifted hall.
On their knees are two alone ;
The palfrey and the barb have gone :
And then arose those two beside,
And the music from its pride
Falls into a beauteous prayer,
Like an angel quitting air ;
And the King and his soft Queen
Smile upon those two serene,
Whom the priest, accosting bland,
Puts, full willing, hand in hand.
Ah scarcely even King and Queen
Did they then perceive, I ween,
Nor well to after-memory call,
How they went from out that hall.

What more ? Sir Guy, and then Sir Grey,
Died each upon a fine spring day ;
And, in their hatred of things small,
Left him, now wanting nothing, all :

(All which, at least, that mighty claw
 Permitted them, yclept the law).
 The daughter wept, and wept the more
 To think her tears would soon be o'er ;
 Sir William neither wept nor smil'd,
 But grac'd the father for the child,
 And sent, to join the funeral shows,
 Bearing scutcheons, bearing woes,
 The palfrey ; and full well he goes ;
 Oh ! merrily well the palfrey goes ;
 Grief, great as any there, he knows,
 Yet merrily ever the palfrey goes.

MAHMOUD.*

TO RICHARD HENRY HORNE.

HORNE, hear a theme that should have had its dues
 From thine own passionate and thoughtful Muse.

THERE came a man, making his hasty moan
 Before the Sultan Mahmoud on his throne,
 And crying out—"My sorrow is my right,
 And I *will* see the Sultan, and to-night."
 "Sorrow," said Mahmoud, "is a reverend thing :
 I recognise its right, as king with king ;
 Speak on." "A fiend has got into my house,"
 Exclaim'd the staring man, "and tortures us :
 One of thine officers ;—he comes, the abhorr'd,
 And takes possession of my house, my board,
 My bed :—I have two daughters and a wife, [life."
 And the wild villain comes, and makes me mad with

* This is Mahmoud the Gaznevide, whose history has been told by Gibbon.

“Is he there now?” said Mahmoud.—“No;—he
The house when I did, of my wits bereft; [left
And laugh’d me down the street, because I vow’d
I’d bring the prince himself to lay him in his shroud.
I’m mad with want—I’m mad with misery,
And oh thou Sultan Mahmoud, God cries out for
thee!”

The Sultan comforted the man, and said,
“Go home, and I will send thee wine and bread,”
(For he was poor) “and other comforts. Go;
And, should the wretch return, let Sultan Mahmoud
[know.”

In three days’ time, with haggard eyes and beard,
And shaken voice, the suitor re-appear’d,
And said, “He’s come.”—Mahmoud said not a word,
But rose and took four slaves, each with a sword,
And went with the vex’d man. They reach the
And hear a voice, and see a woman’s face, [place,
That to the window flutter’d in affright:
“Go in,” said Mahmoud, “and put out the light;
But tell the females first to leave the room;
And when the drunkard follows them, we come.”

The man went in. There was a cry, and hark!
A table falls, the window is struck dark:
Forth rush the breathless women; and behind
With curses comes the fiend in desperate mind.
In vain: the sabres soon cut short the strife,
And chop the shrieking wretch, and drink his bloody
life.

“Now *light* the light,” the Sultan cried aloud.
’Twas done; he took it in his hand, and bow’d
Over the corpse, and look’d upon the face;
Then turn’d, and knelt, and to the throne of grace
Put up a prayer, and from his lips there crept
Some gentle words of pleasure, and he wept.

In reverent silence the beholders wait,
 Then bring him at his call both wine and meat ;
 And when he had refresh'd his noble heart,
 He bade his host be blest, and rose up to depart.

The man amaz'd, all mildness now, and tears,
 Fell at the Sultan's feet with many prayers,
 And begg'd him to vouchsafe to tell his slave
 The reason first of that command he gave
 About the light ; then, when he saw the face,
 Why he knelt down ; and, lastly, how it was
 That fare so poor as his detain'd him in the place. }

The Sultan said, with a benignant eye,
 " Since first I saw thee come, and heard thy cry,
 I could not rid me of a dread, that one
 By whom such daring villanies were done,
 Must be some lord of mine,—aye, e'en, perhaps,
 a son. }

Whoe'er he was, I knew my task, but fear'd
 A father's heart, in case the worst appear'd :
 For this I had the light put out ; but when
 I saw the face, and found a stranger slain,
 I knelt and thank'd the sovereign Arbitrer,
 Whose work I had perform'd through pain and fear ;
 And then I rose and was refresh'd with food,
 The first time since thy voice had marr'd my soli-
 tude."

ABOU BEN ADHEM AND THE ANGEL.

ABOU BEN ADHEM (may his tribe increase)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
“What writest thou?”—The vision rais’d its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answer’d, “The names of those who love the Lord.”
“And is mine one?” said Abou. “Nay, not so,”
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, “I pray thee then,
“Write me as one that loves his fellow men.”

The angel wrote, and vanish’d. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And show’d the names whom love of God had bless’d,
And lo! Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest.*

* “On rapporte de lui (Abou-Ishak-Ben-Adhem), qu’il vit en songe un ange qui écrivoit, et que lui ayant demandé ce qu’il faisoit, cet ange lui répondit: “J’écris le nom de ceux qui aiment sincèrement Dieu, tels que sont Malek-Ben-Dinar, Thaber-al-Benani, Aioud-al-Sakhtiani, &c.” Alors il dit à l’ange, “Ne suis-je point parmi ces gens-là?”—“Non,” lui répondit l’ange. “Hé bien,” répliqua-t-il, “écrivez-moi, je vous prie, pour l’amour d’eux, en qualité d’ami de ceux qui aiment Dieu.” L’on ajoute, que le même ange lui révéla bientôt après, qu’il avoit reçu ordre de Dieu de le mettre à la tête de tous les autres.”

D’Herbelot—*Bibliothèque Orientale*, (1781). Tom. i. p. 161.
in voc. *Adhem*.

THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS.

KING FRANCIS was a hearty king, and lov'd a royal sport,
And one day, as his lions fought, sat looking on the court ;
The nobles fill'd the benches, and the ladies in their pride,
And 'mongst them sat the Count de Lorge, with one for whom he sigh'd:
And truly 'twas a gallant thing to see that crowning show,
Valour and love, and a king above, and the royal beasts below.

Ramp'd and roar'd the lions, with horrid laughing jaws ;
They bit, they glared, gave blows like beams, a wind went with their paws ;
With wallowing might and stifled roar they roll'd on one another,
Till all the pit with sand and mane was in a thunderous smother ;
The bloody foam above the bars came whisking through the air ;
Said Francis then, " Faith, gentlemen, we're better here than there."

De Lorge's love o'erheard the King, a beauteous lively dame
With smiling lips and sharp bright eyes, which always seem'd the same ;

She thought, the Count my lover is brave as
 brave can be ;
 He surely would do wondrous things to show his
 love of me ;
 King, ladies, lovers, all look on ; the occasion is
 divine ;
 I'll drop my glove to prove his love ; great glory
 will be mine.

She dropp'd her glove to prove his love, then look'd
 at him and smil'd ;
 He bow'd, and in a moment leap'd among the lions
 wild :
 The leap was quick, return was quick, he has
 regain'd the place,
 Then threw the glove, but not with love, right in
 the lady's face.
 " By God !" said Francis, " rightly done !" and
 he rose from where he sat ;
 " No love," quoth he, " but vanity, sets love a task
 like that."*

* " Lions' Street took its name from the building and courts wherein were kept the King's great and small lions. One day, whilst Francis the First amused himself with looking at a combat between his lions, a lady having let her glove drop, said to De Lorges, ' If you would have me believe that you love me as much as you swear you do, go and recover my glove.' De Lorges went down, took up the glove in the midst of these furious animals, returned, and threw it in the lady's face ; and notwithstanding all the advances she made, and all the arts she used, would never see her afterwards."

Historical Essays upon Paris, translated from the French of M. de Saint Foix. (Lond. 1767.) Vol. i. p. 149. St. Foix quotes from Brantôme.

THE PANTHER.

THE panther leap'd to the front of his lair,
And stood with a foot up, and snuff'd the air ;
He quiver'd his tongue from his panting mouth,
And look'd with a yearning towards the south ;
For he scented afar in the coming breeze
News of the gums and their blossoming trees ;
And out of Armenia that same day
He and his race come bounding away.
Over the mountains and down to the plains
Like Bacchus's panthers with wine in their veins, }
They came where the woods wept odorous rains ; }
And there, with a quivering, every beast
Fell to his old Pamphylian feast.

The people who liv'd not far away,
Heard the roaring on that same day ;
And they said, as they lay in their carpeted rooms,
The panthers are come, and are drinking the gums :
And some of them going with swords and spears
To gather their share of the rich round tears,
The panther I spoke of follow'd them back ;
And dumbly they let him tread close in the track,
And lured him after them into the town ;
And then they let the portcullis down,
And took the panther, which happened to be
The largest was seen in all Pamphily.

By every one there was the panther admir'd,
So fine was his shape and so sleekly attir'd,
And such an air, both princely and swift,
He had when giving a sudden lift

To his mighty paw, he'd turn at a sound,
 And so stand panting and looking around,
 As if he attended a monarch crown'd. }
 And truly, they wonder'd the more to behold
 About his neck a collar of gold,
 On which was written, in characters broad,
 "Arsaces the king to the Nysian God."
 So they tied to the collar a golden chain,
 Which made the panther a captive again,
 And by degrees he grew fearful and still,
 As if he had lost his lordly will.

But now came the spring, when free-born love
 Calls up nature in forest and grove,
 And makes each thing leap forth, and be
 Loving, and lovely, and blithe as he.
 The panther he felt the thrill of the air,
 And he gave a leap up, like that at his lair ;
 He felt the sharp sweetness more strengthen his
 veins, }
 Ten times than ever the spicy rains,
 And ere they're aware, he has burst his chains: }
 He has burst his chains, and ah, ha! he's gone,
 And the links and the gazers are left alone, }
 And off to the mountains the panther's flown. }

Now what made the panther a prisoner be ?
 Lo ! 'twas the spices and luxury.
 And what set that lordly panther free ?
 'Twas Love !—'twas Love !—'twas no one but he.*

* "What is said of that Taurus which is so called by us, extending beyond Armenia, (though this has been called in question), is now made apparent from the panthers, which I know have been taken in the spice-bearing part of Pamphylia ; for they, delighting in odours, which they scent at a great distance, quit Armenia, and cross the mountains in search of the tears of the storax, at the time when the wind blows from that quarter, and the trees distil their gums. It is said that a panther

THE FEAST OF THE POETS.

T'OTHER day, as Apollo sat pitching his darts
Through the clouds of November by fits and by
starts,
He began to consider how long it had been,
Since the bards of Old England a session had seen.
“I think,” said the God, recollecting, (and then
He fell twiddling a sunbeam, as I may my pen,)
“I think—let me see—yes, it is, I declare,
As long ago now as that Buckingham there : *
And yet I can't see why I've been so remiss,
Unless it may be—and it certainly is, [lime,
That since Dryden's fine verses, and Milton's sub-
I have fairly been sick of their sing-song and rhyme.
There was Collins, 'tis true, had a good deal to say ;
But the dog had no industry,—neither had Gray :
And Thomson, though dear to my heart, was too
florid
To make the world see that their own taste was horrid.

was once taken in Pamphylia, with a gold chain about its neck, on which was inscribed, in Armenian letters, “Arsaces the king to the Nysæan God.” Arsaces was then king of Armenia, who is supposed to have given it its liberty on account of its magnitude, and in honour of Bacchus, who, amongst the Indians, is called Nisius, from Nysa, one of their towns : this, however, is an appellation which he bears among all the oriental nations. This panther became subject to man, and grew so tame, that it was patted and caressed by every one. But on the approach of spring, a season when panthers become susceptible of love, it felt the general passion, and rushed with fury into the mountains in quest of a mate, with the gold chain about its neck.”—*Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, p. 68.

* Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, wrote the last Session of the Poets. Others were written by Suckling and Rochester.

So ever since Pope, my pet bard of the town,
 Set a tune with his verses, half up and half down,
 There has been such a doling and sameness—by Jove
 I'd as soon have gone down to see Kemble in love.
 However, of late, as they've rous'd them anew,
 I'll e'en go and give them a lesson or two,
 And as nothing's done there now-a-days without
 eating,
 See what kind of set I can muster worth treating."
 So saying, the God bade his horses walk for'ard,
 And, leaving them, took a long dive to the nor'ard:
 For Gordon's he made; and as Gods who drop in do,
 Came smack on his legs through the drawing-room
 window.

And here I could tell, were I given to spin it,
 How all the town shook, as the godhead came in it;
 How bright look'd the poets, and brisk blew the airs,
 And the laurels shot up in the gardens and
 squares;—
 But fancies like these, though I've stores to
 supply me,
 I'd better keep back for a poem I've by me,
 And merely observe that the girls look'd divine,
 And the old folks in-doors exclaim'd "Bless us,
 how fine!"

If you'd fancy, however, what Phœbus might be,
 Imagine a shape above mortal degree,
 His limbs the perfection of elegant strength,—
 A fine flowing roundness inclining to length,—
 A presence that spoke,—an expansion of chest,
 (For the God, you'll observe, like his statues was
 drest),
 His throat like a pillar for smoothness and grace,
 His curls in a cluster,—and then such a face,
 As mark'd him at once the true offspring of Jove,
 The brow all of wisdom, and lips all of love;

For though he was blooming, and oval of cheek,
 And youth down his shoulders went smoothing and
 sleek,
 Yet his look with the reach of past ages was wise,
 And the soul of eternity thought through his eyes.

I would'nt say more, lest my climax should lose ;—
 Yet now I have mention'd those lamps of the Muse,
 I can't but observe what a splendour they shed,
 When a thought more than common came into his
 head : [bright,
 Then they leap'd in their frankness, deliciously
 And shot round about them an arrowy light ;
 And if, as he shook back his hair in its cluster,
 A curl fell athwart them and darken'd their lustre.
 A sprinkle of gold through the duskiness came,
 Like the sun through a tree, when he 's setting in
 flame.

The God then no sooner had taken a chair,
 And rung for the landlord to order the fare,
 Than he heard a strange noise and a knock from
 without,—
 And scraping and bowing, came in *such* a rout !
 There were all the worst play-wrights from Dibdin
 to Terry,
 All grinning, as who should say, "Sha'n't we be
 merry ?"
 With men of light comedy lumb'ring like bears up,
 And men of deep tragedy patting their hairs up.
 The God, for an instant, sat fix'd as a stone,
 Till recov'ring, he said in a good-natur'd tone,
 " Oh, the waiters, I see ;—ah, it 's all very well,—
 Only one of you'll do, just to answer the bell."
 But lord ! to see all the great dramatists' faces !
 They look'd at each other, and made such grimaces !
 Then turning about, left the room in vexation.
 And Colman, they say, fairly mutter'd " Dam-
 nation !"

The God fell a laughing to see his mistake,
 But stopp'd with a sigh for poor Comedy's sake ;
 Then gave mine host orders, who bow'd to the floor,
 And had scarcely back'd out, and shut gently the
 door,

When a hemming was heard, consequential and
 snapping,

And a sour little gentleman walk'd with a rap in :
 He bow'd, look'd about him, seem'd cold, and sat
 down,

And said, " I 'm surpris'd that you 'll visit this
 town :—

To be sure, there are one or two of us who know you,
 But as for the rest, they are all much below you.

So stupid, in gen'ral, the natives are grown,
 They really prefer Scotch reviews to their own ;
 So that what with their taste, their reformers, and
 stuff,

They have sicken'd myself and my friends long
 enough."

" Yourself and your friends !" cried the God in
 high glee ;

" And pray, my frank visitor, who may you be ? "

" Who be ? " cried the other ; " why really—this
 tone—

William Gifford's a name, I think, pretty well
 known ! "

" Oh—now I remember," said Phœbus ;—" ah
 true—

The Anti-La Cruscan that writes the review :—

The rod, though 'twas no such vast matter, that fell
 On that plague of the butterflies,—did very well ;*

* Mr. Gifford, in a satire called the Baviad and Mæviad, killed before their time an ephemeral race of poetasters, generated by the affected fancy of Mr. Merry, a gentleman who signed himself Della Crusca from the academy of that name, of which he was a member. Mr. Gifford, whose perceptions were all of the commonplace order, had a good commonplace judgment, which

And there's something, which even distaste must
 respect,
 In the self-taught example, that conquer'd neglect :
 But not to insist on the recommendations
 Of modesty, wit, and a small stock of patience,
 My visit just now is to poets alone,
 And not to small critics, however well known."'
 So saying he rang, to leave nothing in doubt,
 And the sour little gentleman bless'd himself out.

But glad look'd the God at the next who appear'd,
 For 'twas Campbell, by Poland's pale blessing en-
 dear'd :
 And Montgom'ry was with him, a freeman as true,
 (Heav'n loves the ideal, which practises too) ;
 And him follow'd Rogers, whose laurel tree shows
 Thicker leaves, and more sunny, the older it grows ;
 Rejoicing he came in the god-send of weather :
 Then Scott (for the famous ones all came together) ;
 His host overwhelm'd him with thanks for his novels ;
 Then Crabbe, asking questions concerning Greek
 hovels ;
 And Byron, with eager indifference ; and Moore
 With admiring glad eyes, that came leaping before ;
 And Keats, with young tresses and thoughts, like
 the god's ;
 And Shelley, a sprite from his farthest abodes ;
 Phœbus gave him commissions from Marlowe and
 Plato ;
 And Landor, whom two Latin poets sent bay to,
 (Catullus and Ovid) ; and Southey with looks
 Like a man just awak'd from the depth of his books ;
 And Coleridge, fine dreamer, with lutes in his rhyme ;
 And Wordsworth, the prince of the bards of his time.

served him well enough to expose errors discernible by most people. He only betrayed his own ignorance and presumption, when he came to speak of such a poet as Mr. Keats.

“And now,” said the God,—but he scarcely had
 spoken,
 When bang went the door—you ’d have thought it
 was broken ;
 And in rush’d a mob with a scuffle and squeeze,
 Exclaiming, “What ! Wordsworth, and fellows
 like these !
 Nay then, we may all take our seats as we please !”
 I can’t, if I would, tell you who they all were ;
 But a whole shoal of fops and of pedants were there,
 All the *heart* and *impart* men, and such as suppose
 They write like the Virgils, and Popes, and Boileaus.
 The God smil’d at first with a turn tow’rds the fire,
 And whisper’d “There, tell ’em they’d better retire ;”
 But lord ! this was only to set all their quills up ;
 The rogues did but bustle ; and pulling their frills up,
 Stood fixing their faces, and stirr’d not an inch ;
 Nay, some took their snuff out, and join’d in a pinch.

Then wrath seiz’d Apollo ; and turning again,
 “Ye rabble,” he cried, “common-minded and vain,
 Whate’er be the faults which true bards may commit,
 (And most of ’em lie in your own want of wit,)
 Ye shall try, wretched creatures, how well ye can
 bear
 What such only witness, unsmote with despair.”

He said ; and the place all seem’d swelling with
 light,
 While his locks and his visage grew awfully bright ;
 And clouds, burning inward, roll’d round on each
 To encircle his state as he stood in his pride ; [side,
 Till at last the full Deity put on his rays,
 And burst on the sight in the pomp of his blaze !
 Then a glory beam’d round, as of fiery rods,
 With the sound of deep organs and chorister gods ;
 And the faces of bards, glowing fresh from their skies,
 Came thronging about with intentness of eyes,—

And the Nine were all heard, as the harmony
 swell'd,—
 And the spheres, pealing in, the long rapture
 upheld,—
 And all things above, and beneath, and around,
 Seem'd a world of bright vision, set floating in sound.

That sight and that music might not be sustain'd,
 But by those who in wonder's great school had been
 train'd ;

And even the bards who had graciousness found,
 After gazing awhile, bow'd them down to the ground.
 What then could remain for that feeble-eyed crew ?
 Through the door in an instant they rush'd and they
 flew ;

They rush'd, and they dash'd, and they scrambled,
 and stumbled,
 And down the hall staircase distractedly tumbled,
 And never once thought which was head or was feet,
 And slid through the hall, and fell plump in the
 street.

So great was the panic that smote them to flight,
 That of all who had come to be feasted that night,
 Not one ventur'd back, or would stay near the place ;
 Even Ireland declin'd, notwithstanding his face.

But Phœbus no sooner had gain'd his good ends,
 Than he put off his terrors, and rais'd up his friends,
 Who stood for a moment entranc'd to behold
 The glories subside and the dim-rolling gold,
 And listen'd to sounds, that with ecstasy burning
 Seem'd dying far upward, like heaven returning.
 Then "Come," cried the God in his elegant mirth,
 "Let us make us a heaven of our own upon earth,
 And wake with the lips, that we dip in our bowls,
 That divinest of music,—congenial souls."
 So saying, he led through the door in his state,
 Each bard as he follow'd him blessing his fate ;

And by some charm or other, as each took his chair,
 There burst a most beautiful wreath in his hair.
 I can't tell 'em all, but the groundwork was bay,
 And Campbell, in his, had some oak-leaves and May ;
 And Forget-me-not, Rogers ; and Moore had a vine ;
 And Shelley, besides most magnificent pine,
 Had the plant which thy least touch, Humanity,
 knows ;

And Keats's had forest-tree, basil, and rose ;
 And Southey some buds of the tall Eastern palm ;
 And Coleridge mandragoras, mingled with balm ;
 And Wordsworth, with all which the field-walk
 endears,

The blossom that counts by its hundreds of years.
 Then Apollo put his on, that sparkled with beams,
 And rich rose the feast as an epicure's dreams,—
 Not epicure civic, or grossly inclin'd,
 But such as a poet might dream ere he din'd ;
 For the God had no sooner determin'd the fare,
 Than it turn'd to whatever was racy and rare :
 The fish and the flesh for example were done,
 On account of their fineness, in flame from the sun ;
 The wines were all nectar of different smack,
 To which Muskat was nothing, nor Virginis Lac,
 No, nor even Johannisberg, soul of the Rhine,
 Nor Montepulciano, though King of all Wine.*
 Then as for the fruits, you might garden for ages,
 Before you could raise me such apples and gages ;
 And all on the table no sooner were spread, [red.
 Than their cheeks next the God blush'd a beautiful
 'Twas magic, in short, and deliciousness all ;—
 The very men-servants grew handsome and tall ;
 To velvet-hung ivory the furniture turn'd,
 The service with opal and adamant burn'd,
 Each candlestick chang'd to a pillar of gold,
 While a bundle of beams took the place of the mould,

* "Montepulciano d'ogni vino è il Re."

Bacco in Toscana.

The decanters and glasses pure diamond became,
 And the corkscrew ran solidly round into flame :—
 In a word, so completely forestall'd were the wishes,
 E'en harmony struck from the noise of the dishes.

It can't be suppos'd I should think of repeating
 The fancies that flow'd at this laureat meeting ;
 I haven't the brains, and besides was not there ;
 But the wit may be easily guess'd by the chair.

I must mention, however, that during the wine,
 Our four great old poets were toasted with nine.
 Then others with six or with three as it fitted,
 Nor were those who translate with a gusto, omitted.
 At this, Southey begging the deity's ear—

“ I know,” interrupted Apollo, “ 'tis Frere :” *
 And Scott put a word in, and begg'd to propose—
 “ I'll drink him with pleasure,” said Phœbus,
 “ 'tis Rose.” †

Then talking of lyrics, he call'd upon Moore,
 Who sung such a song, that they shouted “ Encore !”
 And the God was so pleas'd with his taste and his
 tone,

He obey'd the next call, and gave one of his own,—
 At which you'd have thought,—('twas so witching
 a warble,)

The guests had all turn'd into listening marble ;
 The wreaths on their temples grew brighter of bloom,
 As the breath of the Deity circled the room ;
 And the wine in the glasses went rippling in rounds,
 As if follow'd and fann'd by the soft-winged sounds.

Thus chatting and singing they sat till eleven,
 When Phœbus shook hands, and departed for
 heaven ;

* See the admirable version from the Spanish, at the end of
 Mr. Southey's *Chronicle of the Cid*.

† The abridger of Casti's *Animali Parlanti*, and imitator of
 Berni.

“For poets,” he said, “who would cherish their
 powers,
 And hop’d to be deathless, must keep to good hours.”
 So off he betook him the way that he came,
 And shot up the north, like an arrow of flame ;
 For the Bear was his inn ; and the comet, they say,
 Was his tandem in waiting to fetch him away.

The others then parted, all highly delighted ;
 And so shall I be, when you find me invited.

CAPTAIN SWORD AND CAPTAIN PEN.

To the RIGHT HON. LORD BROUGHAM, with whom the writer humbly differs on some points, but deeply respects for his motives on all ; great in office for what he did for the world, greater out of it for calmly awaiting his time to do more ; the promoter of education ; the expediter of justice ; the liberator from slavery ; and (what is the rarest virtue in a statesman) always a denouncer of war, this Poem is inscribed by his ever affectionate servant,

Jan. 30, 1835.

LEIGH HUNT.

I.

HOW CAPTAIN SWORD MARCHED TO WAR.

CAPTAIN SWORD got up one day,
 Over the hills to march away,
 Over the hills and through the towns ;
 They heard him coming across the downs,
 Stepping in music and thunder sweet,
 Which his drums sent before him into the street,
 And lo ! ’twas a beautiful sight in the sun ;
 For first came his foot, all marching like one,

With tranquil faces, and bristling steel,
And the flag full of honour as though it could feel.
And the officers gentle, the sword that hold
'Gainst the shoulder heavy with trembling gold,
And the massy tread, that in passing is heard,
Though the drums and the music say never a word.

And then came his horse, a clustering sound
Of shapely potency, forward bound,
Glossy black steeds, and riders tall,
Rank after rank, each looking like all,
Midst moving repose and a threatening charm,
With mortal sharpness at each right arm,
And hues that painters and ladies love,
And ever the small flag blush'd above.

And ever and anon the kettle-drums beat
Hasty power midst order meet ;
And ever and anon the drums and fifes
Came like motion's voice, and life's ;
Or into the golden grandeurs fell
Of deeper instruments, mingling well,
Burdens of beauty for winds to bear ;
And the cymbals kiss'd in the shining air,
And the trumpets their visible voices rear'd,
Each looking forth with its tapestried beard,
Bidding the heavens and earth make way
For Captain Sword and his battle-array.

He, nevertheless, rode indifferent-eyed,
As if pomp were a toy to his manly pride,
Whilst the ladies lov'd him the more for his scorn,
And thought him the noblest man ever was born,
And tears came into the bravest eyes,
And hearts swell'd after him double their size,
And all that was weak, and all that was strong,
Seem'd to think wrong's self in him could not be
wrong ;

Such love, though with bosom about to be gored,
Did sympathy get for brave Captain Sword.

So, half that night, as he stopp'd in the town,
'Twas all one dance, going merrily down,
With lights in windows, and love in eyes,
And a constant feeling of sweet surprise ;
But all the next morning 'twas tears and sighs ;
For the sound of his drums grew less and less,
Walking like carelessness off from distress ;
And Captain Sword went whistling gay,
“ Over the hills and far away.”

II.

HOW CAPTAIN SWORD WON A GREAT VICTORY.

THROUGH fair and through foul went Captain
Pacer of highway and piercer of ford, [Sword,
Steady of face in rain or sun,
He and his merry men, all as one ;
Till they came to a place, where in battle-array
Stood thousands of faces, firm as they,
Waiting to see who could best maintain
Bloody argument, lords of pain ;
And down the throats of their fellow-men
Thrust the draught never drunk again.

It was a spot of rural peace,
Ripening with the year's increase,
And singing in the sun with birds,
Like a maiden with happy words—
With happy words which she scarcely hears
In her own contented ears,
Such abundance feeleth she
Of all comfort carelessly,

Throwing round her, as she goes,
 Sweet half-thoughts on lily and rose,
 Nor guesseth what will soon arouse
 All ears—that murder 's in the house ;
 And that, in some strange wrong of brain,
 Her father hath her mother slain.

Steady ! steady ! The masses of men
 Wheel, and fall in, and wheel again,
 Softly as circles drawn with pen.

Then a gaze there was, and valour and fear,
 And the jest that died in the jester's ear,
 And preparation, noble to see,
 Of all-accepting mortality,—
 Tranquil Necessity gracing Force ;
 And the trumpets danc'd with the stirring horse ;
 And lordly voices, here and there,
 Call'd to war through the gentle air ;
 When suddenly, with its voice of doom,
 Spoke the cannon 'twixt glare and gloom, }
 Making wider the dreadful room :
 On the faces of nations round
 Fell the shadow of that sound.

Death for death ! The storm begins ;
 Rush the drums in a torrent of dins ;
 Crash the muskets, gash the swords ;
 Shoes grow red in a thousand fords ;
 Now for the flint, and the cartridge bite ;
 Darkly gathers the breath of the fight,
 Salt to the palate and stinging to sight ;
 Muskets are pointed they scarce know where ;
 No matter : Murder is cluttering there.
 Reel the hollows : close up ! close up !
 Death feeds thick, and his food is his cup.
 Down go bodies, snap burst eyes ;
 Trod on the ground are tender cries ;

Brains are dash'd against plashing ears ;
Ha ! no time has battle for tears.

No time to be " breather of thoughtful breath"
Has the giver and taker of dreadful death.
See where comes the horse-tempest again,
Visible earthquake, bloody of mane !
Part are upon us, with edges of pain ;
Part burst, riderless, over the plain,
Crashing their spurs, and twice slaying the slain.
An odour, as of a slaughter-house,
The distant raven's dark eye bows.

Victory ! victory ! Man flies man ;
Cannibal patience hath done what it can—
Carv'd, and been carv'd, drunk the drinkers down,
And now there is one that hath won the crown :
One pale visage stands lord of the board—
Joy to the trumpets of Captain Sword !

His trumpets blow strength, his trumpets neigh,
They and his horse, and waft him away ;
They and his foot, with a tir'd proud flow,
Tatter'd escapers and givers of woe.
Open, ye cities ! Hats off ! hold breath !
To see the man who has been with Death ;
To see the man who determineth right
By the virtue-perplexing virtue of might.
Sudden before him have ceas'd the drums,
And lo ! in the air of empire he comes !

All things present, in earth and sky,
Seem to look at his looking eye.

III.

OF THE BALL THAT WAS GIVEN TO CAPTAIN SWORD.

BUT Captain Sword was a man among men,
 And he hath become their playmate again :
 Boot, nor sword, nor stern look hath he,
 But holdeth the hand of a fair ladye,
 And floweth the dance a palace within,
 Half the night, to a golden din,
 Midst lights in windows and love in eyes,
 And a constant feeling of sweet surprise ;
 And ever the look of Captain Sword
 Is the look that's thank'd, and the look that's ador'd.

There was the country-dance, small of taste ;
 And the waltz, that loveth the lady's waist ;
 And the galopade, strange agreeable tramp,
 Made of a scrape, a hobble and stamp ;
 And the high-stepping minuet, face to face,
 Mutual worship of conscious grace ;
 And all the shapes in which beauty goes
 Weaving motion with blithe repose.

And then a table a feast display'd,
 Like a garden of light without a shade,
 All of gold, and flowers, and sweets,
 With wines of old church-lands, and sylvan meats,
 Food that maketh the blood feel choice ;
 Yet all the face of the feast, and the voice,
 And heart, still turn'd to the head of the board ;
 For ever the look of Captain Sword
 Is the look that's thank'd, and the look that's ador'd.

Well content was Captain Sword ;
 At his feet all wealth was pour'd :

On his head all glory set ;
 For his ease all comfort met ;
 And around him seem'd entwin'd
 All the arms of womankind.

And when he had taken his fill
 Thus, of all that pampereth will,
 In his down he sunk to rest,
 Clasp'd in dreams of all its best.

 IV.

OF WHAT TOOK PLACE ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE
 THE NIGHT AFTER THE VICTORY.

'Tis a wild night out of doors ;
 The wind is mad upon the moors,
 And comes into the rocking town,
 Stabbing all things up and down,
 And then there is a weeping rain
 Huddling 'gainst the window-pane,
 And good men bless themselves in bed ;
 The mother brings her infant's head
 Closer, with a joy like tears,
 And thinks of angels in her prayers ;
 Then sleeps, with his small hand in hers. }

Two loving women, lingering yet
 Ere the fire is out, are met,
 Talking sweetly, time-beguil'd,
 One of her bridegroom, one her child,
 The bridegroom he. They have receiv'd
 Happy letters, more believ'd
 For public news, and feel the bliss
 The heavenlier on a night like this.
 They think him hous'd, they think him blest,
 Curtain'd in the core of rest,
 Danger distant, all good near ;
 Why hath their " Good night " a tear ?

Behold him ! By a ditch he lies
 Clutching the wet earth, his eyes
 Beginning to be mad. In vain
 His tongue still thirsts to lick the rain,
 That mock'd but now his homeward tears ;
 And ever and anon he rears
 His legs and knees with all their strength,
 And then as strongly thrusts at length.
 Rais'd, or stretch'd, he cannot bear
 The wound that girds him, weltering there :
 And " Water ! " he cries, with moonward stare.

His nails are in earth, his eyes in air,
 And " Water ! " he crieth—he may not forbear.
 Brave and good was he, yet now he dreams
 The moon looks cruel ; and he blasphememes.

" Water ! water ! " all over the field :
 To nothing but Death will that wound-voice yield.
 Come hither, ye cities ! ye ball-rooms, take breath !
 See what a floor hath the dance of death !

The floor is alive, though the lights are out ;
 What are those dark shapes, flitting about ?
 Flitting about, yet no ravens they,
 Not foes, yet not friends—mute creatures of prey ;
 Their prey is lucre, their claws a knife,
 Some say they take the beseeching life.
 Horrible pity is theirs for despair,
 And they the love-sacred limbs leave bare.

O goodness in horror ! O ill not all ill !
 In the worst of the worst may be fierce Hope still.
 To-morrow with dawn will come many a wain,
 And bear away loads of human pain,
 Piles of pale beds for the spitals ; but some }
 Again will awake in home-mornings, and some, }
 Dull herds of the war, again follow the drum. }

From others, faint blood shall in families flow, }
 With wonder at life, and young oldness in woe, }
 Yet hence may the movers of great earth grow. }
 Now, even now, I hear them at hand,
 Though again Captain Sword is up in the land,
 Marching anew for more fields like these
 In the health of his flag in the morning breeze.

Sneereth the trumpet, and stampeth the drum,
 And again Captain Sword in his pride doth come;
 He passeth the fields where his friends lie lorn,
 Feeding the flowers and the feeding corn,
 Where under the sunshine cold they lie,
 And he hasteth a tear from his old grey eye.
 Small thinking is his but of work to be done,
 And onward he marcheth, using the sun:
 He killeth, he wasteth, he spouteth his fires
 On babes at the bosom, and bed-rid sires;
 He bursteth the gates of an agoniz'd town,
 And the doors of shrieking homes go down,
 And the lover is slain, and the parents are nigh—

Oh God! let me breathe, and look up at thy sky!
 Good is as hundreds, evil as one;
 Round about goeth the golden sun.

V.

HOW CAPTAIN SWORD, IN CONSEQUENCE OF HIS GREAT
 VICTORIES, BECAME INFIRM IN HIS WITS.

BUT to win at the game, whose moves are death,
 It maketh a man draw too proud a breath:
 And to see his force taken for reason and right,
 It tendeth to unsettle his reason quite.
 Never did chief of the line of Sword
 Keep his wits whole at that drunken board.

He taketh the size, and the roar, and fate,
 Of the field of his action, for soul as great :
 He smiteth and stunneth the cheek of mankind,
 And saith "Lo ! I rule both body and mind."

Captain Sword forgot his own soul,
 Which of aught save itself resented controul ;
 Which, whatever his deeds, ordain'd them still,
 Bodiless monarch, enthron'd in his will :
 He forgot the close thought, and the burning heart,
 And pray'rs, and the mild moon hanging apart,
 Which lifteth the seas with her gentle looks,
 And growth, and death, and immortal books,
 And the Infinite Mildness, the soul of souls,
 Which layeth earth soft 'twixt her silver poles ;
 Which ruleth the stars, and saith not a word ;
 Whose speed in the hair of no comet is heard ;
 Which sendeth the soft sun, day by day,
 Mighty, and genial, and just alway,
 Owing no difference, doing no wrong,
 Loving the orbs and the least bird's song,
 The great, sweet, warm angel with golden rod,
 Bright with the smile of the distance of God.

Captain Sword, like a witless thing,
 Of all under heaven must needs be king,
 King of kings, and lord of lords,
 Swayer of souls as well as of swords,
 Ruler of speech, and through speech, of thought ;
 And hence to his brain was a madness brought.
 He madden'd in East, he madden'd in West,
 Fiercer for sights of men's unrest,
 Fiercer for talk, amongst awful men,
 Of their new mighty leader, Captain Pen,
 A conqueror strange, who sat in his home,
 Like the wizard that plagued the ships of Rome,
 Noiseless, showless, dealing no death,
 But victories, winged, went forth from his breath.

VI.

OF CAPTAIN PEN, AND HOW HE FOUGHT WITH CAPTAIN
SWORD.

Now tidings of Captain Sword and his state
 Were brought to the ears of this Pen the Great,
 Who rose and said, "His time is come."
 And he sent him, but not by sound of drum,
 Nor trumpet, nor other hasty breath,
 Hot with questions of life and death,
 But only a letter calm and mild ;
 And Captain Sword he read it, and smil'd,
 And said, half in scorn, and nothing in fear,
 (Though his wits seem'd restor'd by a danger near,
 For brave was he ever)—"Let Captain Pen
 Bring at his back a million men,
 And I'll talk with his wisdom, and not till then."
 Then replied to his messenger Captain Pen,
 "I'll bring at my back a *world* of men."

Out laugh'd the captains of Captain Sword,
 But their chief look'd vex'd, and said not a word,
 For thought and trouble had touch'd his ears
 Beyond the bullet-like sense of theirs ;
 And wherever he went, he was 'ware of a sound,
 Now heard in the distance, now gathering round,
 Which irk'd him to know what the issue might be ;
 For the soul of the cause of it well guess'd he.
 Indestructible souls among men
 Were the souls of the line of Captain Pen ;
 Sages, patriots, martyrs mild
 Going to the stake, as child
 Goeth with his prayer to bed ;
 Dungeon-beams from quenchless head ;

Poets, making earth aware
 Of its wealth in good and fair ;
 And the benders to their intent,
 Of metal and of element ;
 Of flame the enlightener, beauteous ;
 And steam, that bursteth his iron house ;
 And adamantine giants blind,
 That, without master, have no mind.
 Heir to these, and all their store,
 Was Pen, the power unknown of yore ;
 And as their might still created might,
 And each work'd for him by day and by night,
 In wealth and wondrous means he grew,
 Fit to move the earth anew ;
 Till his fame began to speak
 Pause, as when the thunders wake,
 Muttering, in the beds of heaven :
 Then, to set the globe more even,
 Water he call'd, and Fire, and Haste,
 Which hath left old Time displac'd—
 And Iron, mightiest now for Pen,
 Each of his steps like an army of men—
 (Sword little knew what was leaving him then)—
 And out of the witchcraft of their skill,
 A creature he call'd, to wait on his will—
 Half iron, half vapour, a dread to behold—
 Which evermore panted and evermore roll'd,
 And utter'd his words a million fold.
 Forth sprang they in air, down raining like dew,
 And men fed upon them, and mighty they grew.

Ears giddy with custom that sound might not hear,
 But it woke up the rest, like an earthquake near ;
 And that same night of the letter, some strange
 Compulsion of soul brought a sense of change ;
 And at midnight the sound grew into a roll
 As the sound of all gath'rings from pole to pole,

From pole unto pole, and from clime to clime,
 Like the roll of the wheels of the hasting of time ;—
 A sound as of cities, and sound as of swords
 Sharpening, and solemn and terrible words,
 And laughter as solemn, and thunderous drumming,
 A tread as if all the world were coming.
 And then was a lull, and soft voices sweet
 Call'd into music those terrible feet,
 Which rising on wings, lo ! the earth went round
 To the burn of their speed with a golden sound ;
 With a golden sound, and a swift repose
 Such as the blood in the young heart knows ;
 Such as Love knows, when his tumults cease,
 When all is quick, and yet all is at peace.
 And when Captain Sword got up next morn,
 Lo ! a new-fac'd world was born ;
 For not an anger nor pride would it shew,
 Nor aught of the loftiness now found low,
 Nor would his own men strike a single blow :
 Not a blow for their old, unconsidering lord
 Would strike the good soldiers of Captain Sword ;
 But weaponless all, and wise they stood,
 In the level dawn, and calm brotherly good ;
 Yet bow'd to him they, and kiss'd his hands,
 For such were their new lord's commands,
 Lessons rather, and brotherly plea ;
 Reverence still the past, quoth he ;
 Reverence the struggle and mystery,
 And faces human in their pain ;
 Nor his the least, that could sustain
 Cares of mighty wars, and guide
 Calmly where the red deaths ride.

“ But how ? what now ? ” cried Captain Sword ;
 “ Not a blow for your gen'ral ? not even a word ?
 What ! traitors ? deserters ? ”

“ Ah no ! ” cried they ;
 “ But the game ’s at an end ; the “ wise won’t play . ”

“ And where ’s your old spirit ? ”

“ The same, though another ;
 Man may be strong without maiming his brother . ”

“ But enemies ? ”

“ Enemies ! Whence should they come,
 When all interchange what was known but to some ? ”

“ But famine ? but plague ? worse evils by far . ”

“ O last mighty rhet’ric to charm us to war !
 Look round—what has earth, now it equably speeds,
 To do with these foul and calamitous needs ?
 Now it equably speeds, and thoughtfully glows,
 And its heart is open, never to close ?

“ Still I can govern,” said Captain Sword ;
 “ Fate I respect ; and I stick to my word . ”
 And in truth so he did ; but the word was one }
 He had sworn to all tyrannies under the sun, }
 To do, for the people, the least could be done. }
 Besides, what had *he* with his worn-out story
 To do with the cause he had wrong’d and the glory ?

No : Captain Sword a sword was still,
 He could not unteach his lordly will ;
 He could not attemper his single thought ;
 It might not be bent, nor newly wrought :
 And so, like the tool of a disus’d art,
 He stood at his wall, and rusted apart.

’Twas only for many-soul’d Captain Pen
 To make a world of swordless men.

BLUE-STOCKING REVELS;

OR,

THE FEAST OF THE VIOLETS.

CANTO I.

*Shewing what sort of rebuke Apollo gave his Nymphs, and how
gods furnish houses.*

Lo ! I, who in verse flowing smooth as the wine
("Modest youth!") once recorded a dinner divine,*
And shew'd the great god of the sun, entertaining
With wit and crack'd walnuts the poets then reigning;
Now sing, in a dance fitter still for the crupper
Whose wings bore me thither, a more divine supper;
For *that* was of man, though of Phœbus; but *this* is
Of Phœbus, and woman, and blue-stocking blisses.

The god, you must know, then, like other bright souls,
Attends not to ev'ry dull curfew that tolls,
But often pays visits at night-time, and sits
Conversing till morning with beauties and wits
In guise of some talker renown'd,—my Carlyle,
Jeffrey, Wilson, or Wordsworth;—joy listens the
while;—

And in case he's too late for Aurora, they say,
Some proxy, I know not who, brings up the day;
Which is likely;—for after a night such as that,
The day, you may notice, is terribly flat.

Well; the eve of last May-day, his work being
Apollo sat playing his lute in the sun, [done,

* The "*Feast of the Poets.*"

As backward his car in the deep began sinking ;
 And round it, the Water-Nymphs, with their eyes
 winking,
 Plash'd, patting the horses, and loos'ning the reins,
 While the lute through the lustre sent flooding its
 strains,
 When lo ! he saw coming towards him, in pairs,
 Such doves of Petitions, and loves of sweet Pray'rs,
 All landing, as each touch'd his chariot, in sighs,
 And begging his aid in behalf of bright eyes,
 That it made him look sharper, to see whence
 they came :—
 The windows on earth, at the flash of that aim,
 Burst suddenly all into diamonds and flame. }

“ By Jove ! ” said Apollo, “ well thought on.—
 I've dined
 With the Poets :—'tis now highly proper, I find,
 To descend (and with finger-tips here he fell trim-
 ming
 His love-locks celestial) and sup with the Women.”

He said ; and some messages giving those daughters
 Of Ocean,—arch-eyed,—buxom dancers in waters,—
 They gave him some answer (I never heard what)
 Which they paid for, i'faith, with a dance on the spot ;
 For shaking his locks, and a pleasant frown casting,
 He thrust his car back with his foot everlasting,
 And sprang up in air with a bound so divine,
 As sous'd their sweet souls in the roar of the brine.
 Then laughing the laugh of the gods, he rose higher,
 And higher, and higher, on the whirl of his fire,
 Lark mighty ; till choosing his road, like the dove
 Which bears at its warm bosom letters of love,
 He shot, all at once, in a long trail of light, [night,
 Like the star that comes liquidly through the soft
 And stood in a “ House to Let,” facing Hyde Park,
 “ Unfurnish'd ; ”—but not so, ye gods, before dark !

O Seddon ! O Gillow ! O Mr. Morell !
 O Taprell and Holland ! O Minter ! O Snell !
 O ev'ry one else, dear to new married spouses,
 Don't speak any more of your fitting up houses ;
 Don't mention your *sèvres*, your *buhls*, or-*moulus* ;
 And for ever henceforth have no customers, Hughes :
 Quench the light of your lustres, great Perry and
 Ye Bantings, be counted extremely so-so : [Co. :
 Nay, hold your tongue, Robins ; amaze us no longer
 In paragraphs, " coming it " stronger and stronger :
 Cease roaring in great A, and wheedling in small ;
 And thou, even thou, greatest gusto of all,
 Tasteful shade of magnificent, house-warming
 Guelph, [shelf !"
 Turn about in thy tomb, and say, " Laid on the

The house not an instant had felt the god's
 presence, [quintessence
 When something—I know not what—but a
 Of fragrance and purity hallow'd the place,
 Some spirit of lilies, and crystal, and grace.
 His height he had stoop'd, as he enter'd the door,
 Tow'rd's the human ; but still his own costume he
 wore,
 Or at least a Greek vest ; and be sure he wore bay ;
 In short, was a kind of Apollo d'Orsay.
 Then gliding from room to room, like a slow bee,
 Half a foot from the floor, his lute went playing he,
 And the sound was a magical charm to invest
 Whatsoever he look'd on with all he lik'd best.
 Nor indeed was it strange that his lute should do this,
 When Amphion, you know, built a city with his.

Thus the ball-room, whose wainscot was stucco
 before,
 Rose in arches of flowers, midway from the floor,
 All dabbled with dew-drops, and stirr'd with a
 breath ; [“ their death,”
 While the rest (for no cold could give shoulders

Where Phœbus was present) was all a fair sight
 Of iv'ry, and cushions of silk, bridal white :—
 (More colours for these would flow in with the ball):
 And betwixt the fair couches were services small
 Of ices, and creams, and clear jellies smooth-soul'd,
 The very tip-ends of refreshment and cold.

Then the drawing-room—What, think ye, hung
 the walls there ? [his hair.
 Cloth of gold ? No, of sunbeams. 'Twas made of
 The immense window-curtains, Calypso's own
 woollen,
 Like clouds to the sunset, hung gorgeously sullen.

But as to the supper-room ! O thou Aladdin,
 Thy genii had found it a thing to go mad in ; [eyes)
 Such wealth (which yet somehow fell soft on the
 Branch'd it over with jewels of wonderful size,
 All carv'd into fruit, thick and leafy, and all
 Encrusting white marble, as vines do a wall.
 The fruit, colour's minions, like ecstasy shone ;
 While the marble, most fair, and yet mellow of tone,
 Came cooling the warmth, the rich masses between ;
 But the ceiling was one mighty sapphire serene,
 From the centre of which, and their stamens of gold,
 Lilies shed such a light, as 'twas peace to behold.

And forth, from all sides, issued tap'stry and table,
 And sofa, with pictures of loveliest fable,
 And portraits, with eyes that seem'd happy to come,
 Of wits and sweet women ; and every room
 Had music, unseen in it, waiting to play ;
 A note, now and then, would come chuckling away,
 As though with its rapture it vainly was striving ;—
 And hark ! the burst comes ! the fair guests are
 [arriving.

But first, I must tell you who form'd the specta-
 Imprimis, the Poets, the happy Translators, [tors ;—

The Wits, the Physicians (they say that the godhead
To Knighton, Smith, Elliotson, specially nodded) ;*
All Artists, all *Archers* (a bright blushing stare
Put a bud in the cheeks of their green-gowned fair) ;
The Musicians, the Singers (of course the chief
only) ;

And lastly (for fear any heart should feel lonely,
Although with a god,—and to crown it besides
With the sweetest of glories, *home-glory*), all prides
Were consulted, of husbands, and friends, and rela-
And lovers, and children.—Of all adorations [tions,
Commend me to that, which enwrapt ev'ry feature
In love tow'rds the god, for this household good-
[nature.

“ Well said ! ” cries the reader ; “ but stop, Mr.
Poet ;—

The god's invitation—pray how could they know it ?
We hear of no message ; no list had enroll'd 'em.”
'Tis true ; 'twas not wanted ; their *Geniuses* told
'em ;—

The Spirit that's born with us, but becomes visible
Solely with those to such suppers admissible.†

* Sir William Knighton has died since these verses were written. I had hoped, by this mention of his name, to give a moment's pleasure to one whose skill, manners, and liberality were worthy of a profession eminent for its friendliness to men of letters ; and who, in zealously discharging his duties in the highest quarter, did not forget the least influential of his acquaintances.—With regard to “ Smith,” it may be allowed me to mention, considering the numerous respectable Smiths existing, doubtless, in the medical as in other professions, that the name of the most eminent of them, Dr. Southwood Smith, is here intended.

† It hardly need be observed, that the word “ Genius,” here used in its mythological sense, does not, of necessity, imply that higher order of faculty, which gifts the possessors with something peculiar to them, and leaves a gap when they are gone. And as little does it imply equality of faculty. The difference of degree, in this respect, among the ladies ensuing, is as great, as specification of it would be ungallant. All the criticisms

Beauteous it was, to see each how he led
 His charge by the hand, with the flame on his head,
 She walking, he gliding. It gave her such grace,
 As made the crowd happy to look in her face
 (For never did crowd gather yet at a door so) ;
 The plain became handsome, the handsomest more
 If plain any face can be call'd that has eyes [so,
 Such as almost all brain with its deep look sup-
 plies :

The music ceas'd playing, as each was presented ;
 And Silence, with sighs, 'twas so ultra-contented,
 Felt tears in the eyes of its rapture, to see
 How they kiss'd the god's hand, and their eyelids
 kiss'd he ;

And then, on each entrance, there pour'd forth again
 Some characteristic and exquisite strain,
 And thus came each charmer of verse, or of story,
 In a sort of sweet tempest of pleasure and glory.

I tell not the dresses. Suffice it that Titian
 Had own'd himself conquer'd at *this* exhibition ;
 So rich were the colours ! such autumn ! such May !
 For spirits and years made them more or less gay ;
 And the elder in orange and russet came, queenly ;
 The younger in lily and rose, sprinkled greenly :
 The buxom, uniting both tastes, fill'd the doors
 With their shoulders and frills, *à la Louis Quatorze* ;
 Or with robes *à l'antique*, and with crowns from
 their graperies : [ries !
 Blest were the eyes that beheld their broad drape-

which follow relate to the individuals themselves only, and insinuate no comparison with others, whether of preference or the reverse.

I take this opportunity of adding, that for obvious reasons no mention is made of anonymous writers.

CANTO II.

How the Visitors were presented to Apollo, and what sort of a Ball he gave them.

Now as to the names (how much less then the
 natures, [tures,
 And writings, and beauties !) of all the dear crea-
 I boast not to mention the whole of them ;—nay,
 I live so sequester'd, so out of the way, [omit
 That perhaps I don't know them, — perhaps shall
 Some bud of such promise, such sweet virgin wit,
 Or for want of due reading, shall fail in due notice
 Of some such delight of all earth's epiglottis,
 That when I am told what I've done, I shall tear }
 From my head, in pure anguish, whole masses of }
 hair : }
 You will think it a barber's shop all round my chair. }
 And yet, when I vow that I 'll seize all occasion
 Of loading " the love " with my best reparation,
 My "startling," "intense," "truly new," "soul-sub-
 duing,"
 And other fond truths of impartial reviewing,
 I fancy I hear her, in tones of caresses,
 Exclaim, " God preserve his dear elderly tresses ! "

Lo ! first then (for not in stern order of fame,
 But in blest alphabetical order they came,
 Though she that first enter'd, well headed the dears)
 Mrs. Adams, * rare mistress of thought and of tears ;
 Then Aikin judicious ;—discreet Mrs. Austin,
 Whose English her German you 'll never find lost
 in ;—
 And Madame d'Arblay, mighty grave all the while,
 Yet at heart smitten still betwixt fun and a style,

* Authoress of the tragedy founded on early Christian history, entitled "Vivia Perpetua."

And longing to tell us more ladies' distresses
 'Twixt lords, and vulgarians, and debts for their
 dresses.

So deep was her curtsey, the hoop that she wore
 Seem'd fairly conveying her right through the floor.

But up she swam round, and Miss Baillie succeeded :
 No queen could have come with such pages as she did ;
 For who, do you think, held her train up?—The
 Passions :

They did indeed ; all too in elegant fashions.
 The god in his arms with gay reverence lock'd her,
 For two sakes,—her own, and her brother's, the
 doctor.

A young lady then, whom to miss were a *caret*
 In any verse-history, named, I think, Barrett,
 (I took her at first for a sister of Tennyson)
 Knelt, and receiv'd the god's kindest benison.
 —“Truly,” said he, “dost thou share the blest power
 Poetic, the fragrance as well as the flower ;
 The gift of conveying impressions unseen, [mean.
 And making the vaguest thoughts know what they

“Lady Blessington!” cried the glad usher aloud,
 As she swam through the doorway, like moon from
 a cloud : [creature !
 I know not which most her face beam'd with,—fine
 Enjoyment, or judgment, or wit, or goodnature.
 Perhaps you have known what it is to feel longings
 To pat silken shoulders at routs, and such throng-
 ings;—

Well, think what it was at a vision like that !
 A Grace after dinner ! A Venus grown fat !
 Some “Elderly Gentleman” risked an objection ;
 But this only made us all swear her “perfection.”
 His arms the host threw round the liberal bodice,
 And kiss'd her, exactly as god might do goddess.

Betham, Blackwood, Bowles, Bray, and Miss
 Browne, too, were there ;
 What a sweet load of B's! But then what a despair!
 For I know not their writings. (I'm tearing my hair!)

Cary Burney came next,* so precise yet so trusting,
 Her heroines are perfect, and yet not disgusting.
 "However," said Phœbus, "I can't quite approve
 them :
 Conceit follows close on the mere right to love them."

Then came Fanny Butler, perplex'd at her heart
 Betwixt passion and elegance, nature and art ;
 The daughter of sense and of grace, yet made wroth
 With her own finer wit by o'er-straining at both.
 Phœbus smil'd on her parents, who stood there in
 sight,
 And quoted some lines from her play about "Night."

Marg'ret Cullen succeeded, whose novels one
 lives in,
 Like one of her hamlets, where talk never gives in ;
 Dear, kind-hearted, arch-humour'd, home-loving
 dame ;
 And to sum up all eulogy,—worthy her name.†
 "You make me sleep sometimes," quoth Phœbus,
 "'tis true ;
 But I do even that, let me tell you, with few."

"Lady Dacre."—'Twas pleasant to see the god raise,
 In honour of her and of Petrarch, his bays.‡

* Authoress of "Traits of Nature" "Country Neighbours," &c. A niece of Madame d'Arbly.

† Miss Cullen, authoress of "Home," &c., a descendant, if I mistake not, of the great and good Scottish physician.

‡ See translations of sonnets from Petrarch in Ugo Foscolo's masterly Essays on that poet, particularly the one about the pilgrim. Lady Dacre is celebrated for her powers in sculpture,

“And how go your own winged horses?” quoth he:
 Then he asked after Margaret Gillies and Mee,
 Seyffarth, Carpenter, Robertson, Barrett, and Sharp,
 The Corboux, the Chalons:—in short, more than
 his harp

Has strings to outnumber, or haste can disclose;
 And look'd at the gall'ries, and smil'd as they rose:
 For they all sat together, in colours so rare
 They appear'd like a garden, enchanting the air;
 But what pleas'd me hugely, he call'd to my wife,
 And said, “You have done Shelley's mood to the life.”
 Some lady musicians completed the bower,
 At head of whom earnestly gaz'd Betsy Flower.

At the sight of Miss Edgeworth, he said, “Here
 comes one,
 As sincere and as kind as lives under the sun;
 Not poetical, eh?—nor much giv'n to insist
 On utilities not in utility's list
 (Things, nevertheless, without which the large heart
 Of my world would but play a poor husk of a part),
 But most truly, within her own sphere, sympathetic,
 And that's no mean help tow'rd's the practic-poetic.
 Then, smiling, he said a most singular thing,—
 He thank'd her for making him “saving of string”!!
 But for fear she should fancy he didn't approve her in
 Matters more weighty, prais'd much her ‘Manœuvr-
 ing;’ [dense,
 A book, which if aught could pierce craniums so
 Might supply cunning folks with a little good sense.
 And her Irish (he added) poor souls! so impress'd
 him,
 He knew not if most they amus'd, or distress'd him.

especially in animals. A horse, after a model of hers, full of grace and fire, is well known in the plaster-cast shops. The names which follow in the text are those of reigning female artists and amateurs.

No fault had Miss Ferrier to find with her lot ;
She was hail'd by the god as the " lauded of Scott."

" Mrs. Gore." Phœbus open'd his arms, with a
face,

In the gladness of which was the coming embrace.
" For her satire," he said, " wasn't evil, a bit ;
But as full of good heart, as of spirits and wit ;
Only somewhat he found, now and then, which
A little too much on the fashions it rated, [dilated
And heaps of ' Polite Conversation' so true, [two ;
That he, once, really wish'd the three volumes were
But not when she dwelt upon daughters or mothers ;
Oh, then the three made him quite long for three
others ;

And poor ' Mrs. Armytage,' warning exaction,
Sits arm-chair'd for ever, a dread petrification.

Then how much good reading ! what fit flowing
words !
What enjoyment, whether midst houses or herds !
'Twas the thinking of men with the lightness of
birds ! "

Never prais'd be prose-love in a style so poetic.—
Then he kiss'd Mrs. Gillies by right sympathetic,
And somebody smiling, and looking askance,
He said, "*Honi soit*, my friend, *qui mal y pense* ;
What in gods is a right and confirms a good fame,
Were in you a presumption. The same's not the
same." [dame
And with this profound speech, and a bow to the
(Whom he thank'd for ' Cleone,' and ' Gentile and
Jew,'

And for other things far more didactic and blue,
But advis'd, for the future, to preach reformation
With all of her sweets, and no exacerbation)
He rais'd Mrs. Hall from her rev'rence profound,
Saying, " Nonsense, my dear ; clasp me honestly
round :—

For the gods love the pleasure you take, 'tis so hearty,
In all sorts of characters, careless of party."

And now came Miss Hamilton. Phœbus presented
A look to her curtsey so little contented,
It seem'd less for poetess fit than for beldam !
In fact, she provok'd him by writing so seldom.

Mrs. Hoffland he tenderly welcom'd and styled
" Good motherly soul ;" and benignantly smiled
On the close cap of Howit. " These Muse Quakeresses
Are Noes (he said) turn'd to the sweetest of Yesses.

Lo ! Jameson accomplish'd ; and Lamb, the fine
brain,
(News of Charles in Elysium brought balm to its
pain) ;
And Landon, whose grief is so dulcet a treasure,
We'd weep to oblige her, but can't for the pleasure.

" Ah ! welcome home, Martineau, turning statistics
To stories, and puzzling your philogamystics !
I own I can't see, any more than dame Nature,
Why love should await dear good Harriet's dicta-
ture ! } [ture.]
But great is earth's want of some love-legisla- }

" And, Mitford, all hail ! with a head that fo
green [seen."
From your glad village crowners can hardly be
And with that he shone on it, and set us all blinking ;
And yet at her kind heart sat tragedy, thinking.
Then Montagu,—Eleanora Louisa !
Was ever name finer 'twixt Naples and Pisa ?
But not in name only the lady hath merit ;
Her thoughts have an eye, and the right inward spirit.

And dear Lady Morgan ! Look, look how she comes.
With her pulses all beating for freedom, like drums,—

So Irish, so modish, so *mixtish*, so wild,
 So committing herself, as she talks, like a child,
 So trim yet so easy, polite yet big-hearted,
 That truth and she, try all she can, won't be parted.
 She'll put on your fashions, your latest new air,
 And then talk so frankly, she'll make you all stare:—
 Mrs. Hall may say "Oh," and Miss Edgeworth say
 "Fie,"

But my lady will know all the what and the why.
 Her books, a like mixture, are so very clever,
 The god himself swore he could read them for ever;
 Plot, character, freakishness, all are so good;
 And the heroine's herself, playing tricks in a hood.
 So he kiss'd her, and call'd her "eternal good wench;"
 But ask'd, why the devil she spoke so much French?

"Mrs. Norton." The god, stepping forward a pace,
 Kiss'd her hand in return, with respect in his face,
 But said, "Why indulge us with nothing but sighs?
 You best prove your merits when cheerful and wise:
 Be still so; be just to the depth of your eyes." }
 Then he turn'd to us all, and repeated, in tones
 Of approval so earnest as thrill'd to one's bones,
 Some remarks of hers (bidding us learn them all too)
 On the art of distinguishing false love from true.
 After which, as he seated her near him, he cried,
 "'Twas a large heart, and loving, that gave us this
 guide."*

* The following is the passage alluded to. It is from one of the lady's novels, but I cannot remember which, having made the extract some time ago, without adding the reference. As it is a female who speaks, the caution is given with respect to men only; but it need not be added, that it equally applies to the love professed by man or woman:—

"We are too apt to think only how **WE** are treated; too little accustomed to observe what is the treatment of **OTHERS** by the same person. Watch and weigh. If a man speak evil of his friends to you, he will also speak evil of you to his friends. Kind and caressing words are easily spoken, and pleasant to

Well advanc'd, at this juncture, with true loving
 eyes,
 Mrs. Opie, delightful for hating 'White Lies.'
 'Good Temper,' too, prince of the Lares (God bless
 him), owes
 Thousands of thanks to her nice duodecimos.*
 — "What! and *you* too must turn Quakeress,
 must you?"
 Cried Phœbus;—"well, spite of your costume, I'll
 trust you:
 Though truth, you dear goose, as all born Quakeresses
 Will tell you, has nothing in common with dresses:
 Besides, 'tis blaspheming my colours and skies:—
 However, it shews you still young, and that's wise;
 And since you must needs have no fault, let us see
 If you can't mend it somehow, betwixt you and me."
 He said; and threw round her a light of such love,
 As turn'd her slate hues to the neck of the dove.

Enter Pardoe all spirits, and Porter all state,
 But sweet ones, like ladies whom knights made elate
 (The latter wore some foreign order, whose name
 I forget; but it well graced the chivalrous dame).
 Then hearty good Roberts; and Roche (dear old
 deathless
 Regina, whose lovers my boyhood made breathless),
 And Shelley, four-fam'd,—for her parents, her lord,
 And the poor lone impossible monster abhor'd.

hear; but the man who bears a kind heart, bears it to all, and
 not to one only. He who appears to love only the friend he
 speaks to, and slanders or speaks coldly of the rest, loves no one
 but himself."

Every one of these sentences is a jewel.

* Mrs. Opie's Tales ("Simple Tales," "Tales of Real Life," &c.)
 and her admirable novel, "Temper," are all printed in good,
 comfortable-sized, portable volumes, not too big for the pocket,
 yet with a largish type; so that, in every respect, they may
 literally be said to furnish some of the easiest reading in the
 language.

(So sleek and so smiling she came, people stared,
To think such fair clay should so darkly have
dared ;

But Apollo the very name lov'd so, he turn'd
To a glory all round her, which shook as it burn'd,
And a whirlwind of music came sweet from the
spheres) :—

Then his shape he resum'd, with the bay round his
ears,

And on Sheridan smil'd, name with wit ever
found,

And on Somerville, head most surprisingly crown'd ;
For instead of the little Loves, laughing at colleges,
Round it, in doctors' caps, flew little Knowledges !
Then came young Twalmley, nice sensitive thing,
Whose pen and whose pencil give promise like
spring ;

Then Whitfield, — then Wortley, — and acridly
bright

In her eyes, but sweet-lipp'd, the slaves' friend,
Fanny Wright.

And now came the dance ; for, lo ! catching up two,
Since the guests had all come, Phœbus made, as he
A grace and a beauty of waiving decorum [flew,
(For wit and warm heart carry all things before 'em)
And leading the way, swept them off to the ball,
Into which he plung'd instantly, music and all ;
For the band felt his coming, and gave such a rare
Storm of welcome, as seem'd to blow back his bright
hair ;

And so he came whirling it, gods ! how divinely !
The hearts of the whole room, I warrant, beat finely :
In fact, hadn't he himself kept their wits sound,
The room, the whole evening, had seem'd going
round :

But, what was amazing, he so danc'd with all,
He suffic'd for the total male part of the ball !

Not as dancer theatrical, making a shew
 (Bah!—shocking to think of—Excessively *no!*) }
 But gentleman-god-like, and all *comme-il-faut*. }
 Now with one, now with t'other he danc'd, now
 with *ten!*

For your god in his dancing is several men.
 Fanny Butler he waltz'd with; he jigg'd it with
 Morgan;

With Hall he develop'd the rigadon organ;
 To Pardoe he shew'd Spain's impassion'd velocity;
 Norton, the minuet's high reciprocity.

—Then he took Landon, ere she was aware,
 Like a dove in a whirlwind, and whisk'd her in air;
 Or as Zephyr might catch up some rose-haunting
 Or as Mercury once netted Flora, they say:* [fay,
 And then again, stately, like any *Sultain*
 With his Queen, he and Blessington trod a *paràun*,—
 Which meaneth a “peacock dance.” Truly 'twas
 grand to see

How they came spreading it, *pavoneggiàndosi!*†
 —Up, at the sight, rose the oldest at last,
 And join'd in a gen'ral dance, “furious and fast,”
 With which the god mingled, like fire in a wheel,
 Pervading it, golden; till reel after reel,
 Bearing sheer off its legs with them giddy three-score,
 They spun to the supper-room, clean through the
 door.

* See a charming stanza in Ariosto, a picture by itself, in which he describes this adventure,—a fiction, I believe, of his own. (*Orlando Furioso*. Canto xv. st. 57.) A collection of additions to ancient mythology by modern poets, Ariosto, Spenser, and others, would make a delightful book.

† I find this word, accompanied by a due relish of it, in some papers on Dancing in the *New Monthly Magazine*. (See the number for May, 1836.) There is no language like the Italian for a happy magniloquence between jest and earnest. What a word is this *pavoneggiàndosi* for expressing the stately flow of an imitation of the peacock, with that lift too and sudden movement in the midst of it, marked by the accent! But I must not be tempted into these luxuries of annotation.

Then quoth Madame d'Arblay, panting much from
 her journey, [Burney !!]"
 "Well—*this* beats my father himself, Doctor

CANTO III.

*Of the Supper that Apollo gave his Visitors, and with what
 sort of spectacle and of after-course he amazed them.*

You remember those supper-room walls, made
 of flowers,
 Which beat whatsoever for dead paramours
 The lords of the east in white temples have done,
 Where in emeralds and rubies fond epitaphs run ?*
 Well,—a gallery lurk'd sweetly behind them ; and
 there [where,
 We spectators, scarcely knowing what took us, or
 Got somehow, as soon as the guests had down
 sat 'em, [at 'em.
 And found ourselves gazing most snugly down

And thus as they sat before supper, to rest 'em,
 [blest 'em ;—
 Fresh airs through the rooms came increasing, and
 So sweet, all grew silent, exchanging rapt looks ;
 And the silence ran thick with a bubbling of brooks.—

Not long :—for commingling, by finest degrees,
 With the stir of the foliage, and swell of the breeze,
 A concert arose,—so delicious, so new,
 So earnest, so fond, so appealing to *you*,
 The notes seem'd to bathe in the tears which }
 they drew. }

* Alluding to the accounts of the mausoleum, in particular,
 built by one of the Mogul emperors for his mistress, the walls
 of which were of marble, flowered, as here described, with
 jewellery.

Then there issued (get Vincent Novello, some
 To show you the strain, for he took it away) [day,
 A world-heavy gust, like all organs in one,
 Or as though had swept earthward the roar of the
 sun, [tresses,
 Or the face of some god with his thunder-loud
 Who comes like a terror, stays gently, and blesses,
 And leaves us secure in the strength of humility.
 —Phœbus however, with host-like civility,
 Tried them no farther with godhead so grave :
 To his sprites, on the sudden, blithe orders he gave,
 And quoting the line about “ lips being fed,”
 (Which applied not alone to one heaven, he said,
 For ambrosia and nectar sustain’d the realms upper)
 There rose, veil’d in mist, to soft music, a supper.

Very beauteous the mist was,—thin, white, with a
 An odour of violets fill’d the whole room ; [bloom ;
 Ever trembled the music ; and as the mist clear’d,
 First, bunches of violets gently appear’d,—
 Then silver,—then gold,—then the tops of decanters
 Of diamond,—then peaches, those cheek-like en-
 chanters,
 And other fruit, some in white baskets, and some
 Enleaf’d on the bough, with a dew on the plum ;
 Then dishes, half seen, fit to make a physician
 Turn glutton, from dairies and pastures Elysian ;
 The peaches hung over them, ready to drip ;
 And now the guests sat, and the mirth was let slip, }
 And white went the fingers from foliage to lip. }
 Then the music came sweet over all, like the sound
 Of their fame ; and behind ev’ry lady stood, crown’d
 With the flame on his forehead, her Genius, who
 went
 To and fro with his pinions, on messages bent
 ’Twixt her friends and herself, some sweet fruit or
 sweet word ;
 And ave at the table sweet laughter was heard.

But the best of it was, the god's wit so embrac'd
 The whole room with its kindness and exquisite
 taste,
 Every guest seem'd to feel his arm round her
 own waist. }

And well might seem palpable all which he said!
 For as Pallas leap'd arm'd out of Jupiter's head,
 So gods, when they please, utter *things*, and not
 words!

'Tis a fact!—solid visions!—clouds, armies, trees,
 herds:—

You see them—nay, feel them. Thus, talks he of
 roses?

They come, thick and globy, caressing your noses.
 Of music? 'tis heard: of a sword? you may grasp it:
 Of love, and the bosom you long for? you clasp it.*

Conceive then the joy, when in toasting the women
 Whom wit hath made deathless, *we saw them all*
 swim in!

Each crossing the end of the room!—What a sight!—
 The guests thrust their chairs back at first, in a
 fright.

I declare I beheld them so plainly, it took
 All the self-command in me (so sweet was her
 look)

Not to jump from the gallery, and kiss Mrs.
 Brooke. †

* See a curious speculation in Tucker's "Light of Nature Pursued," in which a guess is made at the mode of speech in a future state.

† Frances Brooke, authoress of "Rosina," "Emily Montague," &c. &c., "as remarkable," says Gorton's Biographical Dictionary, "for the suavity and gentleness of her manners, as for her literary talents." She had the candour, in a dispute with Garrick, to confess publicly that she was in the wrong.

Lady Winchelsea cost me still more to go through
it ;*

But at Lady Ann Barnard, I said " I *must* do it." †

I cannot name all who thus issued from air,
As the god made us see them ;—but Sappho was
As brown as a berry, and little of size ; [there,
But lord ! with such midnight and love in her eyes !
Aspasia's however we thought still more loving :
Heart sat in their pupils, and gentlest approving.
We saw (only fancy it !) Pericles hand her ;
And both (I can testify) look'd up at Landor.
Of Romans (whose women more startle than lull us)
Came none but the dame that's bound up with
Tibullus ; ‡

* Anne, Countess of Winchelsea, in the time of Pope, whom she knew. Gay introduces her among Pope's welcomers home from Greece (his finish of the Iliad) as

—" Winchelsea, still meditating song."

Her poems, amidst a good deal of inferior matter, contain evidences of a true feeling for nature, which has obtained the praise of Wordsworth. " It is remarkable," says he, in the Essay in his Miscellaneous Poems, " that excepting a passage or two in the ' Windsor Forest ' of Pope, and some delightful pictures in the Poems of Lady Winchelsea, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the ' Paradise Lost,' and the ' Seasons,' does not contain a single new image of external nature." In Mr. Dyce's " Specimens of British Poetesses " are to be found two of her best specimens, the " Nocturnal Reverie," and the truly philosophical and fine-hearted effusion entitled the " Spleen ;" but I am surprised that he has omitted her " Petition for an Absolute Retreat," a charming aspiration after one of those sequestered states of felicity which poets love to paint. It is equally beautiful for its thoughts, its pictures, and the music of the burthen which it repeats at the close of each paragraph.

† Lady Ann Barnard, of the house of Balcarres, authoress of " Auld Robin Grey,"—the most beautiful ballad that ever was written.

‡ Sulpicia ; respecting whom, after all, there is much dispute.

But France furnished many, and Italy fair ;
 The laurel look'd sweet in their wild flowing hair.
 Colonna came noble, in widow's black gown ;*
 And Stampa, who worshipp'd a living renown ; †
 Navarre's fair Boccaccio ; ‡ the Rope-maker too ; ||
 Deshoulieres, kind and pensive ; De Launay the
 true ; §
 Sévigné, good mother, a little too fussy ; [Bussy !
 But how, when she will, she beats Walpole and
 Old selfish Du Deffand, more knowing than wise ;
 And Genlis didactic, and D'Houdetot's eyes ; ¶
 And De Stael, mighty mistress, *par Napoleoni*,
 (For so he would make her), and dear Riccoboni ; **

* Vittoria Colonna, the chief Italian poetess, famous for her adoring constancy to the memory of her husband, the Marquis of Pescara, a distinguished soldier.

† Gaspara Stampa, another celebrated Italian poetess, whose writings are full of the passion she entertained, not with a like return, for Collaltino di Collalto, Conte di Trevigi, an eminent soldier. It has been generally supposed that she died of her love ; but she did a much wiser thing,—transferred it to a more loving person.

‡ Margaret of Valois, Queen of Navarre, sister of Francis the First, and grandmother of Henry the Fourth—authoress of the set of tales called “The Heptameron.”

|| Louise Charly, generally called Louisa Labe, or *La Belle Cordière*, wife of a rope-maker at Lyons, celebrated for her numerous accomplishments ; which included Greek and Latin, as well as wit and the guitar.

§ Madame de Stahl, an attendant on the Duchess du Maine in the time of the Regency, here called by her maiden name of de Launay (which she bore almost all her life) to distinguish her from Madame de Stael. Her autobiography is perhaps unique for candour and self-knowledge.

¶ Which charmed Rousseau with their expression, in spite of the small-pox, and their own not very great beauty in other respects. But every one's mind, such as it is, looks out through the eyes,—those windows of the habitation of the soul ; and Rousseau thought he discovered, in hers, the natural, affectionate woman, in the midst of a selfish and artificial generation. Madame d'Houdetot wrote, in the decline of life, some touching verses on love, beginning “Jeune j'aimai.”

** Wife of an Italian actor in Paris, and authoress of numerous

Then Newcastle's Duchess, fantastic but rare ;*
 And Behn and Centlivre, that plain-spoken pair ;
 And Wortley, who, had she been bred in a haram,
 Had turn'd it, infallibly, all harum-scarum ;
 And sweet Brooke aforesaid, all cover'd with May,
 And Lady Ann, lovely for "Auld Robin Gray ;"
 And dearest dear Winchelsea, whom I prefer,
 After all, she so jumps with me, even to her :
 (For although Lady Ann lov'd maternity, *she*
 Lov'd love and the treesso, she might have lov'd me :)
 But I see high-born Devonshire, who with such pith
 Wrote of Tell and his platform ;† and poor Char-
 lotte Smith, [houses,
 Whose muse might have bless'd so her nooks and old
 Had lawyers not plagued her, and debts of herspouse's:
 And Tighe, her own Psyche: and Elliott, sweet Jane,
 Who made the lone dairies mourn Flodden again ;‡

popular novels, remarkable for their good-hearted liberality of sentiment. She was a friend and correspondent of Garrick. She is said to have died in a state approaching to want.

* Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle in the time of Cromwell and Charles the Second. With an ill-regulated judgment, and fantastic notions of her dignity, personal and conventional, she possessed real genius and knowledge, and great consideration for others. She was one of those people who seem to have had a fool for one parent and a sage for the other.

† Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, sister of the late Earl Spencer, and mother of the present Duke, who so well sustains the reputation of the ever liberal and graceful house of Cavendish. See, in Mr. Dyce's collection above noticed, the Duchess's "Ode on the Passage of Mount Saint Gothard," which excited the enthusiasm of Coleridge—

" O lady, nurs'd in pomp and pleasure,
 Where gat you that heroic measure? "

‡ Jane Elliot, authoress of the exquisite lament for the battle of Flodden, called the "Flowers of the Forest," which Sir Walter Scott had such difficulty in believing a modern production. It is like the sullenness of a still morning in the country, before rain.

And Radcliffe, fear-charm'd, ever breathlessly creep-
 ing
 Through castles and corridors, frightful to sleep in :
 Then Barbauld, fine teacher, correcting impatience,
 Or mounting the stars in divine meditations ; *
 Thrale, Brunton, Trefusis, her heart pit-a-patting,
 And Hemans, behind her grand organ-loft chatting ;
 With others I can't well remember at present,
 Except Hannah Moore, looking very unpleasant.

You 'll fancy there could not have possibly been
 A sight now, which females would sooner have seen
 Than all this ; and in truth, when you mark, in a street,
 How they turn and inspect ev'ry bonnet they meet,
 And how light, in comparison, seem to hold men,
 'Tis a point I shall leave to some weightier pen.
 Only pray be assur'd, that whatever the case,
 It tells not a jot to our sex's disgrace ;
 And for this simple reason,—that *us* they are sure of,
 But each other's claims are not quite so secure of.
 Thus much I can swear,—that what follow'd this
 show [glow,
 Was a sight made their cheeks with new gratitude
 And that half the dear souls fell in love on the spot,
 And with posthumous men too ! gallants living not !
 Alas ! did I say so ? Oh impious misgiving !
 Than Shakspeare and Petrarch pray who are more
 living ? [touch ?
 Whose words more delight us ? whose touches more
 For these were the shapes that now pass'd us,—all
 such

* See, in Aikin's "Miscellanies" her admirable essay upon
 "Inconsistency in our Expectations ;" and in Mr. Dyce's col-
 lection, "A Summer Evening's Meditation." containing, among
 other beauties, the following sublime passage :

"This dead of midnight is *the noon of thought ;*
And Wisdom mounts her zenith with the stars."

As the sex should most long to see, out of all story,—
The men that have done them most honour and glory.

First, Homer Andromache brought, like his child;
And beside them was Helen, who blushing smil'd:—
Old traveller was he, and he walk'd with a sword.
Then Antigone came with the Samian lord,
Close-clinging, yet gentle.—Then Petrarch appear'd,
Looking still on the face by down-looking endear'd;
First exalter of animal passion with mind.
Him follow'd, still modestly keeping behind,
With book under arm, and in scholarly gown,
(Oh! ill have the gross understood his renown!)*
Boccaccio, with faces a martyr might bless,
Griselda's among them, the patient excess.
Her look was the sweetest that never knew laughter:
And backward she turn'd tow'rd the shape that
came after,
Great Chaucer. As humbly as maiden went he.
Young queens held their diadems of him in fee;
Young mothers and beauties, clear angels of earth;
I know not which grac'd them most, sorrow or mirth.

Great Cervantes was next, fineromance-loving soul
(For his very jest lov'd it), with whom came a shoal
Of such blithe and sweet beauties, some courtly,
some nurst
In Arcadia, I thought they were Shakspeare's at first;
But when *he* came, good lord! what a heaven upon
earth [and mirth!
Of young beauty was there! what sweet sorrow
What most womanly women! what passion all
beauteous
With patience! What love irrepressibly duteous!
What players at boyhood, as sweet as in gown!
What bosoms, where care might for ever lie down!

* See it vindicated in a manner at once the most pleasant and affecting in that beautiful book, the "Pentameron" of Mr. Landor

Did Heav'n keep a boarding-school, these were its blushers ;—
But Shakspeares would never have done for the ushers.

The women at table, I thought, at this sight,
For pure, tongue-tied bliss, would have fainted outright ;
But Apollo in pity dismiss'd it ; and brought
Richard Steele on the carpet, the heart of light thought ;
Who pass'd, with his wit and his wig, midst a bevy
Of hoops and bright eyes, as if bound for a levee ;
Some cheeks were among them, more sweet for a sprinkle
Of tears ; and the dupe of that horrid beast, Inkle.
Steele led by the hand his own wife in the crowd,
And as if re-assuring her, kiss'd it, and bow'd.

In *discourse* of this kind, and such rapturous expressions
As perfectly scorn'd all the old self-possession,
(For really I can't say which rattled most gaily,
Dear frank Lady Morgan, or quiet Miss Bailey ;
Though somebody said, that tow'rds three, Mrs. Hall
Was, beyond any question, the merriest of all ;
And I'm told that Miss Edgeworth became so
vivacious, [gracious!"]
The damsels from boarding-school whispered, " My
In talk of this kind, and a world of sweet will,
Which turn'd all our heads ('tis in mine dancing still)
The delight ran its rounds, till 'twas time to break up ;
When Apollo, instead of the old parting cup,
(Which with ladies might not have been quite so
decorous)
Exclaim'd, " Set the new parting dishes before us."

No sooner exclaim'd than accomplish'd. Behold
Ev'ry guest had a cover of exquisite mould,

Rich yet simple, of porcelain. Angelica's self
 Had had twice her attractions, with one on her shelf.
 The sides were all painted, not only with Muses
 And Loves, but with Lares, and sweet Household
 Uses :

Good Temper was laying a cloth for Good Heart,
 And the Graces were actually making a tart !
 Each cover for knob had a ruby, heart-shap'd ;
 And the whole stood on legs, with white elegance
 drap'd,—

Legs bewitching, most feminine, tipp'd with a shoe ;
 And the stockings (mark that !) were a violet blue.

All the room fell a whispering ;—“ What can
 they be ?” [be tea ?]
 “ Is it sweets ?”—“ concert-tickets ?”—“ It cannot
 “ I'd give millions to know,” said Miss Porter.
 “ And I,” [“ I'd die.”]
 Said Miss Barrett, “ my head.” Said Miss Landon,
 “ You may see it *ex pede*,” said Mrs. Gore, chuckling :
 “ 'Tis something dress'd à la Sir John—à la
Suckling.”*

And 'twas so.—O Suckling, O gallant Sir John,
 Thou gentleman poet, first plume of the *ton* ;
 Who the reign of two Charleses by anticipation
 Didst mingle in one with thy cordial flirtation ;
 Fresh painter of “ Weddings,” great author of rare
 “ Poet-Sessions,” and *petit-soupés* to the fair ;

* Sir John Suckling, the most genuine poet of his class, stood midway between the sentiment of the first Charles's time and the careless gallantry of the second. His “Ballad on a Wedding” is as fresh as a painting done yesterday ; and will remain so, as long as animal spirits and a taste for nature exist. He is the inventor of “Sessions of the Poets.” It is recorded of him, that he once gave a supper to the ladies of his acquaintance, at which, upon the covers being removed, one of the courses turned out to consist of haberdashery and other such amenities ; doubtless of a taste and costliness proportioned to the spirit of the entertainer.

Unto whom thou didst make happy milliner-loves
 With *bijou* for the sweetmeats, and dishes of gloves,
 And sent'st home the darlings in flutters of fan
 At the wit of the thought of the exquisite man !
 O *facile princeps* of "wit about town," [crown !
 What a bay clips thee now ! What a crown above
 Homer's self had but men for his copiers ; but thee
 Homer's very god copies, thou great *bel esprit* !

The genius that stood behind each lady's chair,
 From her dish took the cover ; when forth, in glad
 air,

Leap'd a couple of small merry Loves, who dis-
 play'd [braid ?
 What d'ye think ?—a new girdle ? a busk ? a new
 No ;—the sweetest blue stockings that ever were
 made. }

The blue was a violet fresh as first love ;
 And the garters were blush-colour, mingled with dove.

To describe the "sensation" produced by this sight,
 The dismays, pretty doubtings, the laughs, the delight,
 Were a task I should never have done, if I told ye,
 And haste does not let me ; for lo and behold ye !
 As doves round a house-top, in summer-time blue,
 Take a sudden stoop earthwards, and sweep from
 the view,

So the Loves, one and all, rising first with a clapping
 Of pinions, pass'd by us, tempestuously flapping ;
 Then stoop'd, quick as lightning, and gliding right
 under

The table, all vanish'd !—A shriek of sweet wonder
 Rose sudden and brief, as of fear come and gone ;
 And 'twas felt thro' the room, that the stockings
 were *on* !

Mute, curious, respectful (for all were inspir'd
 With the feelings so nice an occasion requir'd)

And as the best way to divert their abuse
 (If we use them at all) is to give them *right* use,
 I hereby ordain, that in future the word
 Be confined to the masculine, vain, and absurd,
 And that all real women, ev'n though they may speak
 Not with Sappho's eyes only, but even her Greek,
 All the flow'rs of the flock, the true breathers of
 sweets,
 Take their name from the queen of the sylvan
 retreats ;—
 From the hue which but now had your eyes fix'd upon
 The Violet,—charmer of all that light on it. [it,—
 “No Blue,” ’twill be said, “is the she who so bears her ;
 She's VIOLET :—happy the bosom that wears her.”

Here somebody happening to cough where we sat,
 Phœbus threw up a frown at us none could look at,—
 An eye of so sudden a flame, and tremendous,
 I thought he was going to “flare up” and end us ;
 But seeing us all look submissive, he shone
 With the former mild beams in his hair, and went
 on:—

“ And in truth it depends on yourselves, darling
 creatures,
 Which shade of the hue shall illustrate your natures ;
 For though ye set out with the right one, nay, though
 I myself, as I now do, the blessing bestow,
 Yet the stockings themselves, I must tell you, are
fated,
 And just as they're worn, will be lov'd or get
 hated ;—
 Remaining *true violet*,—glimpses of heaven,—
 As long as you're wise, and your tempers are even
 But if you grow formal, or fierce, or untrue, }
 Alas, gentle colour ! sweet ankle, adieu ! }
 Thou art chang'd ; and Love's self at the changing }
 looks *blue*.

Seize the golden occasion then.—You, who already
 Are gentle,* remain so; and you, who would steady
 Your natures, and mend them, and make out your
 call

To be men's best companions, be such, once for all.
 And remember, that nobody, woman or man,
 Ever charm'd the next ages, since writing began,
 Who thought by shrewd dealing sound fame to
 arrive at,

Had one face in print, and another in private.

“UNAFFECTEDNESS, GENTLENESS, LOVINGNESS.—
 This

Be your motto. And now give your teacher a kiss.”

He said: and the whole house appearing to rise,
 Rooms and all, in a rapture of love, tow'rd's the
 skies,

He did really, by some divine privilege of his,
 Give and take of the dames an ubiquitous kiss;
 Which exalted us all so, and rapt us so far,
 We undoubtedly touch'd at some exquisite star;
 Very likely the morning-star, Venus's own,
 For the odour proclaim'd it some violet zone:
 And to prove 'twas no dream, any more than the
 bedding

Which Prince Camaralzaman had, or Bedreddin,
 I woke, just as they did, at home, about seven,
 The moment Miss Landon was saying, “Good
 Heaven!”

* The word “gentle” is here to be understood in its fine old sense as implying, in the inner nature, all which gentle manners ought to imply, and which, when really gentle, they do. Such is the meaning of the word in Chaucer, Spenser and Shakspeare; in Mr. Wordsworth's

“Gentle lady married to the Moor;”

and in the “cor gentile” and “Donna gentil” of the Italians.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THOUGHTS OF THE AVON,

ON THE 28TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1817.

It is the loveliest day that we have had
This lovely month, sparkling and full of cheer ;
The sun has a sharp eye, yet kind and glad ;
Colours are doubly bright : all things appear
Strong outlined in the spacious atmosphere ;
And through the lofty air the white clouds go,
As on their way to some celestial show.

The banks of Avon must look well to-day ;
Autumn is there in all his glory and treasure ;
The river must run bright ; the ripples play
Their crispest tunes to boats that rock at leisure ;
The ladies are abroad with cheeks of pleasure ;
And the rich orchards in their sunniest robes
Are pouting thick with all their winy globes.

And why must I be thinking of the pride
Of distant bowers, as if I had no nest
To sing in here, though by the houses' side ?
As if I could not in a minute rest
In leafy fields, quiet, and self-possess,
Having, on one side, Hampstead for my looks,
On t'other, London with its wealth of books ?

It is not that I envy autumn there,
 Nor the sweet river, though my fields have none ;
 Nor yet that in its all-productive air
 Was born Humanity's divinest son,
 That sprightliest, gravest, wisest, kindest one—
 Shakspeare ; nor yet, oh no—that here I miss
 Souls not unworthy to be named with his.

No ; but it is, that on this very day,
 And upon Shakspeare's stream, a little lower,
 Where, drunk with Delphic air, it comes away
 Dancing in perfume by the Peary Shore,*
 Was born the lass that I love more and more ;
 A fruit as fine as in the Hesperian store,
 Smooth, roundly smiling, noble to the core ;
 An eye for art : a nature, that of yore
 Mothers and daughters, wives and sisters wore,
 When in the golden age one tune they bore ;
 Marian,—who makes my heart and very rhymes
 run o'er.

TO T. L. H.

SIX YEARS OLD, DURING A SICKNESS.

SLEEP breathes at last from out thee,
 My little, patient boy ;
 And balmy rest about thee
 Smooths off the day's annoy.
 I sit me down, and think
 Of all thy winning ways ;
 Yet almost wish, with sudden shrink,
 That I had less to praise.

* Pershore, or Pearshore, on the Avon ; so named probably from its abundance of pears.

Thy sidelong pillowed meekness,
 Thy thanks to all that aid,
 Thy heart, in pain and weakness,
 Of fancied faults afraid ;
 The little trembling hand
 That wipes thy quiet tears,
 These, these are things that may demand
 Dread memories for years.

Sorrows I've had, severe ones,
 I will not think of now ;
 And calmly 'midst my dear ones
 Have wasted with dry brow ;
 But when thy fingers press
 And pat my stooping head,
 I cannot bear the gentleness,—
 The tears are in their bed.

Ah, first-born of thy mother,
 When life and hope were new,
 Kind playmate of thy brother,
 Thy sister, father too ;
 My light, where'er I go,
 My bird, when prison-bound,
 My hand in hand companion,—no,
 My prayers shall hold thee round.

To say " He has departed"—
 " His voice"—" his face"—is gone ;
 To feel impatient-hearted,
 Yet feel we must bear on ;
 Ah, I could not endure
 To whisper of such woe,
 Unless I felt this sleep ensure
 That it will not be so.

Yes, still he's fix'd, and sleeping !
 This silence too the while—

It 's very hush and creeping
 Seem whispering us a smile :
 Something divine and dim
 Seems going by one's ear,
 Like parting wings of Seraphim,
 Who say, " We 've finished here."

TO J. H.

FOUR YEARS OLD :—A NURSERY SONG.

. Pien d' amori,
 Pien di canti, e pien di fiori.

FRUGON!.

Full of little loves for ours.
 Full of songs, and full of flowers.

AH little ranting Johnny,
 For ever blithe and bonny,
 And singing nonny, nonny,
 With hat just thrown upon ye ;
 Or whistling like the thrushes
 With voice in silver gushes ;
 Or twisting random posies
 With daisies, weeds, and roses ;
 And strutting in and out so,
 Or dancing all about so,
 With cock-up nose so lightsome,
 And sidelong eyes so brightsome,
 And cheeks as ripe as apples,
 And head as rough as Dapple's
 And arms as sunny shining
 As if their veins they 'd wine in :

And mouth that smiles so truly,
 Heav'n seems to have made it newly,
 It breaks into such sweetness
 With merry-lipp'd completeness ;—
 Ah Jack, ah Gianni mio,
 As blithe as Laughing Trio,
 —Sir Richard, too, you rattler,
 So christened from the Tatler,—
 My Bacchus in his glory,
 My little Cor-di-fiori,
 My tricksome Puck, my Robin,
 Who in and out come bobbing,
 As full of feints and frolic as
 That fibbing rogue Autolycus,
 And play the graceless robber on
 Your grave-eyed brother Oberon,—
 Ah ! Dick, ah Dolce-riso,
 How can you, can you be so ?

One cannot turn a minute,
 But mischief—there you 're in it,
 A getting at my books, John,
 With mighty bustling looks, John ;
 Or poking at the roses,
 In midst of which your nose is ;
 Or climbing on a table,
 No matter how unstable,
 And turning up your quaint eye
 And half-shut teeth with " Mayn't I ? "
 Or else you 're off at play, John,
 Just as you'd be all day, John,
 With hat or not, as happens,
 And there you dance, and clap hands,
 Or on the grass go rolling,
 Or plucking flow'rs, or bowling,
 And getting me expenses
 With losing balls o'er fences ;
 Or, as the constant trade is,
 Are fondled by the ladies

With "What a young rogue this is!"
 Reforming him with kisses;
 Till suddenly you cry out,
 As if you had an eye out,
 So desperately tearful,
 The sound is really fearful;
 When lo! directly after,
 It bubbles into laughter.

Ah rogue! and do you know, John,
 Why 'tis we love you so, John?
 And how it is they let ye
 Do what you like and pet ye,
 Though all who look upon ye,
 Exclaim "Ah, Johnny, Johnny!"
 It is because you please 'em
 Still more, John, than you teaze 'em;
 Because, too, when not present,
 The thought of you is pleasant;
 Because, though such an elf, John,
 They think that if yourself, John,
 Had something to condemn too;
 You 'd be as kind to them too,
 In short, because you 're very
 Good-temper'd, Jack, and merry;
 And are as quick at giving,
 As easy at receiving;
 And in the midst of pleasure
 Are certain to find leisure
 To think, my boy, of ours,
 And bring us lumps of flowers.

But see, the sun shines brightly;
 Come, put your hat on rightly,
 And we'll among the bushes,
 And hear your friends the thrushes;
 And see what flow'rs the weather
 Has render'd fit to gather;

And, when we home must jog, you
 Shall ride my back, you rogue you,
 Your hat adorn'd with fine leaves,
 Horse-chestnut, oak, and vine-leaves ;
 And so, with green o'erhead, John,
 Shall whistle home to bed, John.

SUDDEN FINE WEATHER.

READER ! what soul that loves a verse, can see
 The spring return, nor glow like you and me ?
 Hear the quick birds, and see the landscape fill,
 Nor long to utter his melodious will ?

This, more than ever, leaps into the veins,
 When spring has been delay'd by winds and rains,
 And coming with a burst, comes like a show,
 Blue all above, and basking green below.
 And all the people culling the sweet prime :
 Then issues forth the bee to clutch the thyme,
 And the bee poet rushes into rhyme. }

For lo ! no sooner has the cold withdrawn,
 Than the bright elm is tufted on the lawn ;
 The merry sap has run up in the bowers,
 And burst the windows of the buds in flowers ;
 With song the bosoms of the birds run o'er,
 The cuckoo calls, the swallow 's at the door,
 And apple-trees at noon, with bees alive,
 Burn with the golden chorus of the hive.
 Now all these sweets, these sounds, this vernal blaze,
 Is but one joy, express'd a thousand ways :
 And honey from the flowers, and song from birds,
 Are from the poet's pen his overflowing words.

Ah friends ! methinks it were a pleasant sphere,
If, like the trees, we blossom'd every year ;
If locks grew thick again, and rosy dyes
Return'd in cheeks, and raciness in eyes,
And all around us, vital to the tips,
The human orchard laugh'd with cherry lips !

Lord ! what a burst of merriment and play,
Fair dames, were that ! and what a first of May !

So natural is the wish, that bards gone by
Have left it, all, in some immortal sigh !

And yet the winter months were not so well :
Who would like changing, as the seasons fell ?
Fade every year ; and stare, midst ghastly friends,
With falling hairs, and stuck-out fingers' ends ?
Besides, this tale of youth that comes again,
Is no more true of apple-trees than men.
The Swedish sage, the Newton of the flow'rs,
Who first found out those worlds of paramours,
Tells us, that every blossom that we see
Boasts in its walls a separate family ;
So that a tree is but a sort of stand,
That holds those filial fairies in its hand ;
Just as Swift's giant might have held a bevy
Of Lilliputian ladies, or a levee.
It is not he that blooms : it is his race,
Who honour his old arms, and hide his rugged face.

Ye wits and bards then, pray discern your duty,
And learn the *lastingness* of human beauty.
Your finest fruit to some two months may reach :
I've known a cheek at *forty* like a peach.

But see ! the weather calls me. Here's a bee
Comes bounding in my room imperiously,
And talking to himself, hastily burns
About mine ear, and so in heat returns.

O little brethren of the fervid soul,
 Kissers of flowers, lords of the golden bowl,
 follow to your fields and tufted brooks :
 Winter's the time to which the poet looks
 For hiving his sweet thoughts, and making honied
 books. }

POWER AND GENTLENESS.

I'VE thought, at gentle and ungentle hour,
 Of many an act and giant shape of power ;
 Of the old kings with high exacting looks,
 Sceptred and globed ; of eagles on their rocks,
 With straining feet, and that fierce mouth and drear,
 Answering the strain with downward drag austere ;
 Of the rich-headed lion, whose huge frown
 All his great nature, gathering, seems to crown ;
 Of towers on hills, with foreheads out of sight
 In clouds, or shown us by the thunder's light,
 Or ghastly prison, that eternally
 Holds its blind visage out to the lone sea ;
 And of all sunless, subterranean deeps
 The creature makes, who listens while he sleeps,
 Avarice ; and then of those old earthly cones,
 That stride, they say, over heroic bones ;
 And those stone heaps Egyptian, whose small doors
 Look like low dens under precipitous shores ;
 And him, great Memnon, that long sitting by
 In seeming idleness, with stony eye, }
 Sang at the morning's touch, like poetry ;
 And then of all the fierce and bitter fruit
 Of the proud planting of a tyrannous foot,—
 Of bruised rights, and flourishing bad men,
 And virtue wasting heavenwards from a den ;

Brute force, and fury ; and the devilish drouth
 Of the fool cannon's ever-gaping mouth ;
 And the bride-widowing sword ; and the harsh bra
 The sneering trumpet sends across the fray ;
 And all which lights the people-thinning star
 That selfishness invokes,—the horsed war,
 Panting along with many a bloody mane.

I've thought of all this pride, and all this pain,
 And all the insolent plenitudes of power,
 And I declare, by this most quiet hour,
 Which holds in different tasks by the fire-light }
 Me and my friends here, this delightful night, }
 That Power itself has not one half the might
 Of Gentleness. 'Tis want to all true wealth ;
 The uneasy madman's force, to the wise health ;
 Blind downward beating, to the eyes that see ;
 Noise to persuasion, doubt to certainty ;
 The consciousness of strength in enemies,
 Who must be strain'd upon, or else they rise ;
 The battle to the moon, who all the while,
 High out of hearing, passes with her smile ;
 The tempest, trampling in his scanty run,
 To the whole globe, that basks about the sun ;
 Or as all shrieks and clangs, with which a sphere,
 Undone and fired, could rake the midnight ear,
 Compared with that vast dumbness nature keeps
 Throughout her starry deeps,
 Most old, and mild, and awful, and unbroken,
 Which tells a tale of peace beyond whate'er was
 spoken.

A HYMN TO BISHOP ST. VALENTINE.

THE day, the only day returns, }
The true *redde letter* day returns, }
When summer time in winter burns ; }
When a February dawn
Is open'd by two sleeves in lawn
Fairer than Aurora's fingers,
And a burst of all bird singers,
And a shower of *billet-doux*,
Tinging cheeks with rosy hues,
And over all a face divine,
Face good-natured, face most fine,
Face most anti-saturnine,
Even thine, yea, even thine,
Saint of sweethearts, Valentine !
See, he 's dawning ! See, he comes
With the jewels on his thumbs
Glancing us a ruby ray
(For he 's sun and all to day) !
See his lily sleeves ! and now
See the mitre on his brow !
See his truly pastoral crook,
And beneath his arm his book
(Some sweet tome *De Arte Amandi*) :
And his hair, 'twixt saint and *dandy*,
Lovelocks touching either cheek,
And black, though with a silver streak,
As though for age both young and old,
And his look, 'twixt meek and bold,
Bowing round on either side,
Sweetly lipp'd and earnest eyed,
And lifting still, to bless the land,
His very gentlemanly hand.

Hail ! oh hail ! and thrice again
 Hail, thou clerk of sweetest pen !
 Connubialest of clergymen !
 Exquisite bishop !—not at all
 Like Bishop Bonner ; no, nor Hall,
 That gibing priest ; nor Atterbury,
 Although he was ingenious, very,
 And wrote the verses on the “ Fan ; ”
 But then he swore,—unreverend man !
 But very like good Bishop Berkeley,
 Equally benign and clerkly ;
 Very like Rundle, Shipley, Hoadley,
 And all the genial of the godly ;
 Like De Sales, and like De Paul ;
 But most, I really think, of all,
 Like Bishop Mant, whose sweet theology
 Includeth verse and ornithology,
 And like a proper rubric star,
 Hath given us a new “ Calendar,”
 So full of flowers and birdly talking,
 'Tis like an Eden bower to walk in.
 Such another See is thine,
 O thou Bishop Valentine ;
 Such another, but as big
 To that, as Eden to a fig ;
 For all the world's thy diocese,
 All the towns and all the trees,
 And all the barns and villages :
 The whole rising generation
 Is thy loving congregation :
 Enviablè's indeed thy station ;
 Tithes cause thee no reprobation,
 Dean and chapters no vexation,
 Heresy no spoliation.
 Begg'd is thy participation ;
 No one wishes thee translation,
 Except for some sweet explanation.
 All decree thee consecration !

Beatification !

Canonization !

All cry out, with heart-prostration,
Sweet's thy text-elucidation,
Sweet, oh sweet's thy visitation,
And Paradise thy confirmation.

A THOUGHT OR TWO ON READING
POMFRET'S "CHOICE."

I HAVE been reading Pomfret's "Choice" this spring,
A pretty kind of—sort of—kind of thing,
Not much a verse, and poem none at all,
Yet, as they say, extremely natural.
And yet I know not. There's an art in pies,
In raising crusts as well as galleries ;
And he's the poet, more or less, who knows
The charm that hallows the least truth from prose, }
And dresses it in its mild singing clothes. }
Not oaks alone are trees, nor roses flowers ;
Much humble wealth makes rich this world of ours
Nature from some sweet energy throws up
Alike the pine-mount and the buttercup ;
And truth she makes so precious, that to paint
Either, shall shrine an artist like a saint,
And bring him in his turn the crowds that press
Round Guido's saints or Titian's goddesses.

Our trivial poet hit upon a theme
Which all men love, an old, sweet household dream :—
Pray, reader, what is yours ?—I know full well
What sort of home should grace *my* garden-bell,—
No tall, half-furnish'd, gloomy, shivering house,
That worst of mountains labouring with a mouse ;

Nor should I choose to fill a tawdry niche in
 A Grecian temple, opening to a kitchen.
 The frogs in Homer should have had such boxes,
 Or Æsop's frog, whose heart was like the ox's.
 Such puff about high roads, so grand, so small,
 With wings and what not, portico and all,
 And poor drench'd pillars, which it seems a sin
 Not to mat up at night-time, or take in.
 I'd live in none of those. Nor would I have
Veranda'd windows to forestall my grave ;
 Veranda'd truly, from the northern heat !
 And cut down to the floor to comfort one's cold feet !
 My house should be of brick, more wide than high,
 With sward up to the path, and elm trees nigh ;
 A good old country lodge, half hid with blooms
 Of honied green, and quaint with straggling rooms,
 A few of which, white-bedded and well swept,
 For friends, whose names endear'd them, should be
 kept.
 The tip-toe traveller, peeping through the boughs
 O'er my low wall, should bless the pleasant house :
 And that my luck might not seem ill-bestow'd,
 A bench and spring should greet him on the road.

My grounds should not be large. I like to go
 To Nature for a range, and prospect too,
 And cannot fancy she'd comprise for me,
 Even in a park, her all-sufficiency.
 A Chiswick or a Chatsworth might, I grant,
 Visit my dreams with an ambitious want ;
 But then I should be forc'd to know the weight
 Of splendid cares, new to my former state ;
 And these 'twould far more fit me to admire,
 Borne by the graceful ease of noblest Devonshire.
 Such grounds, however, as I had, should look
 Like "something" still ; have seats, and walks, and
 brook ;

One spot for flowers, the rest all turf and trees ;
 For I'd not grow my own bad lettuces.
 I'd build a cover'd path too against rain,
 Long, peradventure, as my whole domain,
 And so be sure of generous exercise,
 The youth of age and med'cine of the wise.
 And this reminds me, that behind some screen
 About my grounds, I'd have a bowling-green :
 Such as in wits' and merry women's days
 Suckling prefer'd before his walk of bays.
 You may still see them, dead as haunts of fairies,
 By the old seats of Killigrews and Careys,
 Where all, alas ! is vanish'd from the ring,
 Wits and black eyes, the skittles and the king ! *
 Fishing I hate, because I think about it,
 Which makes it right that I should do without it.
 A dinner, or a death, might not be much,
 But cruelty's a rod I dare not touch.
 I own I cannot see my right to feel
 For my own jaws, and tear a trout's with steel ;
 To troll him here and there, and spike, and strain,
 And let him loose to jerk him back again.
 Fancy a preacher at this sort of work,
 Not with his trout or'gudgeon, but his clerk :

* Bowls are now thought vulgar : that is to say, a certain number of fine vulgar people agree to call them so. The fashion was once otherwise. Suckling prefers

A pair of black eyes, or a lucky hit
 At bowls, above all the trophies of wit.

Piccadilly, in Clarendon's time, "was a fair house of entertainment and gaming, with handsome gravel walks for shade, and where were an upper and a lower bowling-green, whither very many of the nobility and gentry of the best quality resorted, both for exercise and conversation."—*Hist. of the Rebellion*, vol. ii. It was to the members of Parliament what the merely indoor club-houses are now, and was a much better place for them to refresh their faculties in. The robust intellects of the Commonwealth grew there, and the airy wits that succeeded them.

The clerk leaps gaping at a tempting bit,
 And, hah ! an ear-ache with a knife in it !
 That there is pain and evil, is no rule
 That I should make it greater, like a fool ;
 Or rid me of my rust so vile a way,
 As long as there 's a single manly play.
 Nay, fool 's a word my pen unjustly writes,
 Knowing what hearts and brains have dozed o'er
 "bites ;"

But the next inference to be drawn might be,
 That higher beings made a trout of me ;
 Which I would rather should not be the case,
 Though "Izaak"* were the saint to tear my face,
 And, stooping from his heaven with rod and line,
 Made the fell sport, with his old dreams divine,
 As pleasant to his taste, as rough to mine. }
 Such sophistry, no doubt, saves half the hell,
 But fish would have preferr'd his reasoning well.
 And, if my gills concern'd him, so should I. }
 The dog, I grant, is in that "equal sky ;"
 But, heav'n be prais'd, he 's not my deity. }
 All manly games I 'd play at,—golf and quoits,
 And cricket, to set lungs and limbs to rights,
 And make me conscious, with a due respect,
 Of muscles one forgets by long neglect.
 With these, or bowls aforesaid, and a ride,
 Books, music, friends, the day would I divide,
 Most with my family, but when alone,
 Absorb'd in some new poem of my own ;
 A task which makes my time so richly pass,
 So like a sunshine cast through painted glass,
 (Save where poor Captain Sword crashes the panes),
 That, could my friends live too, and were the gains
 Of toiling men but freed from sordid fears,
 Well could I walk this earth a thousand years.

* Izaak Walton, who thus delighted to spell his name.

CHRISTMAS.

A SONG FOR THE YOUNG AND THE WISE.

CHRISTMAS comes ! He comes, he comes,
Usher'd with a rain of plums ;
Hollies in the windows greet him ;
Schools come driving post to meet him ;
Gifts precede him, bells proclaim him,
Every mouth delights to name him ;
Wet, and cold, and wind, and dark,
Make him but the warmer mark ;
And yet he comes not one-embodied,
Universal 's the blithe godhead,
And in every festal house
Presence hath ubiquitous.
Curtains, those snug room-enfolders,
Hang upon his million-shoulders ;
And he has a million eyes
Of fire, and eats a million pies,
And is very merry and wise ;
Very wise and very merry,
And loves a kiss beneath the berry.

Then full many a shape hath he,
All in said ubiquity :
Now is he a green array,
And now an " eve," and now a " day ;"
Now he's town gone *out* of town,
And now a feast in civic gown,
And now the pantomime and clown
With a crack upon the crown,
And all sorts of tumbles down ;

And then he 's music in the night,
And the money gotten by 't :
He 's a man that can't write verses,
Bringing some to ope your purses ;
He 's a turkey, he 's a goose,
He 's oranges unfit for use ;
He 's a kiss that loves to grow
Underneath the mistletoe ;
And he 's forfeits, cards, and wassails,
And a king and queen with vassals,
All the " quizzes" of the time
Drawn and quarter'd with a rhyme ;
And then, for their revival's sake,
Lo ! he 's an enormous cake,
With a sugar on the top
Seen before in many a shop,
Where the boys could gaze for ever,
They think the cake so very clever.
Then, some morning, in the lurch
Leaving romps, he goes to church,
Looking very grave and thankful,
After which he 's just as prankful,
Now a saint, and now a sinner,
But, above all, he 's a dinner ;
He 's a dinner, where you see
Everybody's family ;
Beef. and pudding, and mince-pies,
And little boys with laughing eyes,
Whom their seniors ask arch questions,
Feigning fears of indigestions
(As if they, forsooth, the old ones,
Hadn't, privately, tenfold ones) :
He 's a dinner and a fire,
Heap'd beyond your hearts' desire—
Heap'd with log, and bak'd with coals,
Till it roasts your very souls,
And your cheek the fire outstares,
And you all push back your chairs,

And the mirth becomes too great,
 And you all sit up too late,
 Nodding all with too much head,
 And so go off to too much bed.

O plethora of beef and bliss !
 Monkish feaster, sly of kiss !
 Southern soul in body Dutch !
 Glorious time of great Too-Much !
 Too much heat, and too much noise,
 Too much babblement of boys ;
 Too much eating, too much drinking,
 Too much ev'rything but thinking ;
 Solely bent to laugh and stuff,
 And trample upon base Enough.
 Oh, right is thy instinctive praise
 Of the wealth of Nature's ways !
 Right thy most unthrifty glee,
 And pious thy mince-piety !
 For, behold ! great Nature's self
 Builds her no abstemious shelf,
 But provides (her love is such
 For *all*) her own great, good Too-Much,—
 Too much grass, and too much tree,
 Too much air, and land, and sea,
 Too much seed of fruit and flower,
 And fish, an unimagin'd dower !
 (In whose single roe shall be
 Life enough to stock the sea—
 Endless ichthyophagy !)
 Ev'ry instant through the day
 Worlds of life are thrown away ;
 Worlds of life, and worlds of pleasure,
 Not for lavishment of treasure,
 But because she's so immensely
 Rich, and loves us so intensely,
 She would have us, once for all,
 Wake at her benignant call,

And all grow wise, and all lay down
Strife, and jealousy, and frown,
And, like the sons of one great mother,
Share, and be blest, with one another.

THE

LOVER OF MUSIC TO HIS PIANO-FORTE.

—•—
OH friend, whom glad or grave we seek,
Heav'n-holding shrine!
I ope thee, touch thee, hear thee speak,
And peace is mine.
No fairy casket, full of bliss,
Out-values thee ;
Love only, waken'd with a kiss,
More sweet may be.

To thee, when our full hearts o'er-flow
In griefs or joys,
Unspeakable emotions owe
A fitting voice :
Mirth flies to thee, and Love's unrest,
And Memory dear,
And Sorrow, with his tighten'd breast,
Comes for a tear.

Oh, since few joys of human mould
Thus wait us still,
Thrice bless'd be thine, thou gentle fold
Of peace at will.
No change, no sullenness, no cheat,
In thee we find ;
Thy saddest voice is ever sweet,—
Thine answer, kind.

BODRYDDAN.

TO THE MEMORY OF B. Y. AND A. M. D.

OUR fairest dreams are made of truths,
Nymphs are sweet women, angels youths,
And Eden was an earthly bower :
Not that the heavens are false ;—oh no !
But that the sweetest thoughts that grow
In earth, must have an earthly flower :
Blest, if they know how sweet they are,
And that earth also is a star.

I met a lady by the sea,
A heart long known, a face desir'd,
Who led me with sweet breathful glee
To one that sat retir'd ;—
That sat retir'd in reverend chair,
That younger lady's pride and care,
Fading heav'nward beauteously
In a long-drawn life of love,
With smiles below and thoughts above :
And round her play'd that fairy she,
Like Impulse by Tranquillity.

And truly might they, in times old,
Have deem'd her one of fairy mould
Keeping some ancestral queen
Deathless, in a bow'r serene ;
For oft she might be noticed walking
Where the seas at night were talking ;
Or extracting with deep look
Power from out some learned book ;
Or with pencil or with pen
Charming the rapt thoughts of men :

And her eyes ! they were so bright,
 They seemed to dance with elfin light,
 Playmates of pearly smiles, and yet
 So often and so sadly wet,
 That Pity wonder'd to conceive,
 How lady so belov'd could grieve.
 And oft would both those ladies rare,
 Like enchantments out of air,
 In a sudden show'r descend
 Of balm on want, or flow'rs on friend ;
 No matter how remote the place,
 For fairies laugh at time and space.
 From their hearts the gifts were given,
 As the light leaps out of heaven.

Their very house was fairy :—none
 Might find it without favour won
 For some great zeal, like errant-knight,
 Or want and sorrow's holy right ;
 And then they reach'd it by long rounds
 Of lanes between thick pastoral grounds
 Nest-like, and alleys of old trees,
 Until at last, in lawnly ease,
 Down by a garden and its fountains,
 In the ken of mild blue mountains,
 Rose, as if exempt from death,
 Its many-centuried household breath.
 The stone-cut arms above the door
 Were such as earliest chieftains bore,
 Of simple gear, long laid aside ;
 And low it was, and warm and wide,—
 A home to love, from sire to son,
 By white-grown servants waited on.
 Here a door opening breath'd of bowers
 Of ladies, who lead lives of flowers ;
 There, walls were books ; and the sweet witch,
 Painting, had there the rooms made rich
 With knights, and dames, and loving eyes
 Of heav'n-gone kindred, sweet and wise ;

Of bishops, gentle as their lawn,
 And sires, whose talk was one May-dawn.
 Last, on the roof, a clock's old grace
 Look'd forth, like some enchanted face
 That never slept, but in the night
 Dinted the air with thoughtful might
 Of sudden tongue which seem'd to say,
 "The stars are firm, and hold their way."

Behold me now, like knight indeed,
 Whose balmed wound had ceas'd to bleed,
 Behold me in this green domain
 Leading a palfrey by the rein,
 On which the fairy lady sat
 In magic talk, which men call "chat,"
 Over mead, up hill, down dale,
 While the sweet thoughts never fail,
 Bright as what we pluck'd 'twixt whiles,
 The mountain-ash's thick red smiles ;
 And aye she laugh'd, and talk'd, and rode,
 And to blest eyes her visions shew'd
 Of nook, and tow'r, and mountain rare,
 Like bosom, making mild the air ;
 And seats, endear'd by friend and sire,
 Facing sunset's thoughtful fire.
 And then, to make romances true,
 Before this lady open flew
 A garden gate ; and lo ! right in,
 Where horse's foot had never been,
 Rode she ! The gard'ner with a stare
 To see her threat his lilies fair,
 Uncapp'd his bent old silver hair,
 And seem'd to say, "My lady good
 Makes all things right in her sweet mood."

}

O land of Druid and of Bard,
 Worthy of bearded Time's regard,
 Quick-blooded, light-voiced, lyric Wales,
 Proud with mountains, rich with vales,

And of such valour that in thee
 Was born a third of chivalry,
 (And is to come again, they say,
 Blowing its trumpets into day,
 With sudden earthquake from the ground,
 And in the midst, great Arthur crown'd,)
 I used to think of thee and thine
 As one of an old faded line
 Living in his hills apart,
 Whose pride I knew, but not his heart :—
 But now that I have seen thy face,
 Thy fields, and ever youthful race,
 And women's lips of rosiest word
 (So rich they open), and have heard
 The harp still leaping in thy halls,
 Quenchless as the waterfalls,
 I know thee full of pulse as strong
 As the sea's more ancient song,
 And of a sympathy as wide ;
 And all this truth, and more beside,
 I should have known, had I but seen,
 O Flint, thy little shore ; and been
 Where Truth and Dream walk, hand-in-hand,
 Bodryddan's living Fairy-land.

 RONDEAU.

JENNY kiss'd me when we met,
 Jumping from the chair she sat in ;
 Time, you thief, who love to get
 Sweets into your list, put that in :
 Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
 Say that health and wealth have miss'd me,
 Say I'm growing old, but add,
 Jenny kiss'd me.

ALBUMS.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF ROTH A QUILLINAN.

AN Album ! This ! Why, 'tis for aught I see,
Sheer wit, and verse, and downright poetry ;
A priceless book incipient ; a treasure
Of growing pearl ; a hoard for pride and pleasure ;
A golden begging-box, which pretty Miss
Goes round with, like a gipsy as she is,
From bard to bard, to stock her father's shelf,
Perhaps for cunning dowry to herself.

Albums are records, kept by gentle dames,
To shew us that their friends can write their names ;
That Miss can draw, or brother John can write
" Sweet lines," or that they know a Mr. White.
The lady comes, with lowly grace upon her,
" 'Twill be so kind," and " do her book such honour ;"
We bow, smile, deprecate, protest, read o'er
The names to see what has been done before,
Wish to say something wonderful, but can't,
And write, with modest glory, " William Grant."
Johnson succeeds, and Thompson, Jones, and Clarke,
And Cox with an original remark [lines,"
Out of the Speaker ;—then come John's " sweet
Fanny's " sweet airs," and Jenny's " sweet
designs :"
Then Hobbs, Cobbs, Dobbs, Lord Strut, and Lady
Brisk,
And, with a flourish underneath him, Fisk.

Alas ! why sit I here, committing jokes
On social pleasures and good humour'd folks,

That see far better with their trusting eyes,
 Than all the blinkings of the would-be wise ?
 Albums are, after all, pleasant inventions, [tions,
 Make friends more friendly, grace one's good inten-
 Brighten dull names, give great ones kinder looks,
 Nay, now and then produce right curious books,
 And make the scoffer (as it now does me)
 Blush to look round on deathless company.

TO THE QUEEN.

AN OFFERING OF GRATITUDE ON HER MAJESTY'S BIRTHDAY.

THE lark dwells lowly, Madam,—on the ground,—
 And yet his song within the heavens is found ;
 The basest heel may wound him ere he rise,
 But soar he must, for love exalts his eyes.
 Though poor, his heart must loftily be spent,
 And he sings free, crown'd with the firmament.

A poet thus (if love and later fame
 May warrant him to wear that sacred name)
 Hoped, in some pause of birthday-pomp and power,
 His carol might have reach'd the Sovereign's bower ;
 Voice of a heart twice touch'd ; once in its need,
 Once by a kind word, exquisite indeed :
 But Care, ungrateful to a host that long
 Had borne him kindly, came and marr'd his song ,
 Marr'd it, and stopp'd, and in his envious soul
 Dreamt it had ceas'd outright, and perish'd whole.
 Dull god ! to know not, after all he knew,
 What the best gods, Patience and Love, can do.
 The song was lamed, was lated, yet the bird
 High by the lady's bower has still been heard,
 Thanking that balm in need, and that delightful
 word.

Blest be the queen ! Blest when the sun goes down ;
 When rises, blest. May Love line soft her crown.
 May music's self not more harmonious be,
 Than the mild manhood by her side and she.
 May she be young for ever—ride, dance, sing,
 'Twixt cares of state carelessly carolling,
 And set all fashions healthy, blithe, and wise,
 From whence good mothers and glad offspring rise.
 May everybody love her. May she be
 As brave as will, yet soft as charity ;
 And on her coins be never laurel seen,
 But only those fair peaceful locks serene,
 Beneath whose waving grace first mingle now
 The ripe Guelph cheek and good straight Coburgh
 Pleasure and reason ! May she, every day, [brow,
 See some new good winning its gentle way
 By means of mild and unforbidden men !
 And when the sword hath bow'd beneath the pen,
 May her own line a patriarch scene unfold
 As far surpassing what these days behold
 E'en in the thunderous gods, iron and steam,
 As they the sceptic's doubt, or wild man's dream !
 And to this end—oh ! to this Christian end,
 And the sure coming of its next great friend,
 May her own soul, this instant, while I sing,
 Be smiling, as beneath some angel's wing,
 O'er the dear life in life, the small, sweet, new,
 Unselfish self, the filial self of two,
 Bliss of her future eyes, her pillow'd gaze,
 On whom a mother's heart thinks close, and prays.

Your beadsman, Madam, thus, “in spite of
 sorrow,”
 Bids at your window, like the lark, good morrow.

TO THE INFANT PRINCESS ROYAL.

WELCOME, bud beside the rose,
On whose stem our safety grows ;
Welcome, little Saxon Guelph ;
Welcome for thine own small self ;
Welcome for thy father, mother,
Proud the one and safe the other ;
Welcome to three kingdoms ; nay,
Such is thy potential day,
Welcome, little mighty birth,
To our human star the earth.

Some have wish'd thee boy ; and some
Gladly wait till boy shall come,
Counting it, a genial sign
When a lady leads the line.
What imports it, girl or boy ?
England's old historic joy
Well might be content to see
Queens alone come after thee,—
Twenty visions of thy mother
Following sceptred, each the other,
Linking with their roses white
Ages of unborn delight.
What imports it who shall lead,
So that the good line succeed ?
So that love and peace feel sure
Of old hate's discomfiture ?
Thee appearing by the rose
Safety comes, and peril goes ;
Thee appearing, earth's new spring,
Fears no winter's "griesiy king ;"
Hope anew leaps up, and dances
In the hearts of human chances :

France, the brave, but too quick-blooded,
 Wisely has her threat re-studied ;
 England now, as safe as she
 From the strifes that need not be,
 And the realms thus hush'd and still,
 Earth with fragrant thought may fill,
 Growing harvests of all good,
 Day by day, as planet should,
 Till it clap its hands, and cry,
 Hail, matur'd humanity !
 Earth has outgrown want and war ;
 Earth is now no childish star.

But behold, where thou dost lie,
 Heeding nought, remote or nigh !
 Nought of all the news we sing
 Dost thou know, sweet ignorant thing ;
 Nought of planet's love, nor people's ;
 Nor dost hear the giddy steeples
 Carolling of thee and thine,
 As if heav'n had rain'd them wine ;
 Nor dost care for all the pains
 Of ushers and of chamberlains,
 Nor the doctor's learned looks,
 Nor the very bishop's books,
 Nor the lace that wraps thy chin,
 No, nor for thy rank, a pin.
 E'en thy father's loving hand
 Nowise dost thou understand,
 When he makes thee feebly grasp
 His finger with a tiny clasp ;
 Nor dost know thy very mother's
 Balmy bosom from another's,
 Though thy small blind lips pursue it,
 Nor the arms that draw thee to it,
 Nor the eyes, that, while they fold thee,
 Never can enough behold thee.
 Mother true and good has she,
 Little strong one, been to thee,

Nor with listless in-door ways
 Weaken'd thee for future days ;
 But has done her strenuous duty
 To thy brain and to thy beauty,
 Till thou cam'st, a blossom bright,
 Worth the kiss of air and light ;
 To thy healthy self, a pleasure ;
 To the world, a balm and treasure.

THREE VISIONS.

OCCASIONED BY THE BIRTH AND CHRISTENING OF THE
 PRINCE OF WALES.

O LOVE of thanks for gentle deeds,
 O sympathy with lowly needs,
 O claims of care, and balms of song,
 I fear'd ye meant to do me wrong,
 And let me fade with stifled heart,
 Ere time and I had leave to part ;
 But waking lately in the morn,
 Just as a golden day was born,
 Lo the dull clouds, by sickness wrought,
 Began to break on heights of thought,
 And fresh from out the Muse's sky
 Three visions of a Queen had I ;
 Three in auspicious link benign ;
 One dear, one gorgeous, one divine !
 The first—(and let no spirit dare
 That vision with my soul to share,
 But such as know that angels spread
 Their wings above a mother's bed)—
 The first disclos'd her where she lay
 In pillow'd ease, that blessed day,

Which just had made her pale with joy
 Of the wish'd-for, princely boy,
 Come to complete, and stamp with man,
 The line which gentler grace began.
 See, how they smooth her brows to rest,
 Faint, meek, yet proud, and wholly blest ;
 And how she may not speak the while
 But only sigh, and only smile,
 And press his pressing hand who vies
 In bliss with her beloved eyes.

Vanish'd that still and sacred room ;
 And round me, like a pomp in bloom,
 Was a proud chapel, heavenly bright
 With lucid glooms of painted light
 Hushing the thought with holy story,
 And flags that hung asleep in glory,
 And scutcheons of emblazon bold,
 The flowers of trees of memories old.
 And living human flowers were there,
 New colouring the angelic air ;
 Young beauties mix'd with warriors gray,
 And choristers in lily array,
 And princes, and the genial king
 With the wise companioning,
 And the mild manhood, by whose side
 Walks daily forth his two years' bride,
 And she herself, the rose of all,
 Who wears the world's first coronal,—
 She, lately in that bower of bliss,
 How simple and how still to this !
 For ever and anon there roll'd
 The gusty organ manifold,
 Like a golden gate of heaven
 On its hinges angel-driven
 To let through a storm and weight
 Of its throne's consenting's state ;
 Till the dreadful grace withdrew
 Into breath serene as dew.

Comforting the ascending hymn
With notes of softest seraphim.
Then was call on Jesus mild ;
And in the midst that new-born child
Was laid within the lap of faith,
While his prayer the churchman saith,
And gifted with two loving names—
One the heir of warlike fames,
And one befitting sage new line
Against the world grow more benign.

Like a bubble, children-blown,
Then was all that splendour flown ;
And in a window by the light
Of the gentle moon at night,
Talking with her love apart
And her own o'erflowing heart,
That queen and mother did I see
Too happy for tranquillity ;
Too generous-happy to endure
The thought of all the woful poor
Who that same night laid down their heads
In mockeries of starving beds,
In cold, in wet, disease, despair,
In madness that will say no prayer ;
With wailing infants, some ; and some
By whom the little clay lies dumb ;
And some, whom feeble love's excess,
Through terror, tempts to murderousness.
And at that thought the big drops rose
In pity for her people's woes ;
And this glad mother and great queen
Weeping for the poor was seen,
And vowing in her princely will
That they should thrive and bless her still.

And of these three fair sights of mine,
That was the vision most divine.

LINES

ON THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCESS ALICE.

THOUGH the laurel's courtly bough
Boast again its poet now,
One with verse, too, calm and stately,
Fit to sing of greatness greatly,
Granted yet be one last rhyme
To the muse that sang meantime,
If for nought but to make known
That she sang for love alone ;
That she sang from out a heart
Used to play no sordid part ;
That howe'er a hope might rise,
Strange to her unprosperous eyes,
Ere the cloud came in between
All sweet harvests and their queen,
Still the faith was not the fee
Nor gratitude expectancy.
Oh ! the soul that never thought
Meanly, when a throne it fought,
Was it not as far above
All that 's mean, with one to love ?

Welcome then, fair new delight,
Welcome to thy father's sight,
Welcome to thy sister, brother,
And thy sweet strong-hearted mother
(Faithful to all duties she
That could prosper them and thee),
Welcome, playmate of them all,
Future grace of bower and hall,

Queen perchance of some great land
 Whose kisses wait thy little hand.
 Thou art come in right good time,
 With the sweetest of the prime ;
 With the green trees and the flowers,
 Orchard blooms and sunny showers,
 And the cuckoo and the bee,
 And lark's angelic ecstasy,
 And the bird that speaks delight
 Into the close ear of night.

What a world, were human kind
 All of one instructed mind !
 What a world to rule, to please,
 To share 'twixt enterprise and ease !
 Graceful manners flowing round
 From the court's enchanted ground,
 Comfort keeping all secure,
 None too rich, and none too poor.

Thee, meantime, fair child of one
 Fit to see that golden sun,
 Thee may no worse lot befall
 Than a long life, April all ;
 Fuller, much, of hopes than fears,
 Kind in smiles and kind in tears,
 Graceful, cheerful, ever new,
 Heaven and earth both kept in view,
 While the poor look up and bless
 Thy celestial bounteousness.
 And, when all thy days are done,
 And sadness views thy setting sun,
 Mayst thou greet thy mother's eyes,
 And endless May in Paradise.

AN ANGEL IN THE HOUSE.

How sweet it were, if without feeble fright,
Or dying of the dreadful beauteous sight,
An angel came to us, and we could bear
To see him issue from the silent air
At evening in our room, and bend on ours
His divine eyes, and bring us from his bowers
News of dear friends, and children who have never
Been dead indeed,—as we shall know for ever.
Alas ! we think not what we daily see
About our hearths,—angels, that *are* to be,
Or may be if they will, and we prepare
Their souls and ours to meet in happy air,—
A child, a friend, a wife whose soft heart sings
In unison with ours, breeding its future wings.

WEALTH AND WOMANHOOD.

HAVE you seen an heiress
In her jewels mounted,
Till her wealth and she seem'd one,
And she might be counted ?

Have you seen a bosom
With one rose betwixt it ?
And did you mark the grateful blush,
While the bridegroom fix'd it ?

SONGS AND CHORUS OF THE FLOWERS.

ROSES.

WE are blushing Roses,
Bending with our fulness,
'Midst our close-capp'd sister buds
Warming the green coolness.

Whatsoe'er of beauty
Yearns and yet reposes,
Blush, and bosom, and sweet breath,
Took a shape in roses.

Hold one of us lightly,—
See from what a slender
Stalk we bow'r in heavy blooms,
And roundness rich and tender.

Know you not our only
Rival flow'r—the human ?
Loveliest weight on lightest foot,
Joy-abundant woman ?

LILIES.

We are Lilies fair,
The flower of virgin light ;
Nature held us forth, and said,
“Lo ! my thoughts of white.”

Ever since then, angels
Hold us in their hands ;
You may see them where they take
In pictures their sweet stands.

Like the garden's angels
 Also do we seem,
 And not the less for being crown'd
 With a golden dream.

Could you see around us
 The enamour'd air,
 You would see it pale with bliss
 To hold a thing so fair.

VIOLETS.

We are violets blue,
 For our sweetness found
 Careless in the mossy shades,
 Looking on the ground.
 Love's dropp'd eyelids and a kiss,—
 Such our breath and blueness is.

Io, the mild shape
 Hidden by Jove's fears,
 Found us first i' the sward, when she
 For hunger stoop'd in tears.
 "Wheresoe'er her lip she sets,"
 Jove said, "be breaths call'd Violets."

SWEET-BRIAR.

Wild-rose, Sweet-briar, Eglantine,
 All these pretty names are mine,
 And scent in every leaf is mine,
 And a leaf for all is mine,
 And the scent—Oh, that's divine!
 Happy-sweet and pungent-fine,
 Pure as dew, and pick'd as wine.

As the rose in gardens dress'd
 Is the lady self-possess'd,
 I'm the lass in simple vest,
 The country lass whose blood's the best.

Were the beams that thread the briar
 In the morn with golden fire
 Scented too, they 'd smell like me,
 All Elysian pungency.

POPPIES.

We are slumberous poppies,
 Lords of Lethe downs,
 Some awake, and some asleep,
 Sleeping in our crowns.
 What perchance our dreams may know,
 Let our serious beauty show.

Central depth of purple,
 Leaves more bright than rose,
 Who shall tell what brightest thought
 Out of darkest grows ?
 Who, through what funereal pain
 Souls to love and peace attain ?

Visions aye are on us,
 Unto eyes of power,
 Pluto's alway-setting sun,
 And Proserpine's bower :
 There, like bees, the pale souls come
 For our drink with drowsy hum.

Taste, ye mortals, also ;
 Milky-hearted, we ;
 Taste, but with a reverent care ;
 Active-patient be.
 Too much gladness brings to gloom
 Those who on the gods presume.*

* Opium is chiefly made from the white poppy ; but the red is the one so much better known, that the writer has here made it stand for the whole genus.

SONG OF THE FLOWERS.

WE are the sweet Flowers,
Born of sunny showers,
Think, whene'er you see us, what our beauty saith:
Utterance mute and bright
Of some unknown delight,
We fill the air with pleasure, by our simple breath:
All who see us, love us ;
We befit all places ;
Unto sorrow we give smiles ; and unto graces, graces.

Mark our ways, how noiseless
All, and sweetly voiceless,
Though the March winds pipe to make our passage
Not a whisper tells [clear ;
Where our small seed dwells,
Nor is known the moment green, when our tips
We thread the earth in silence, [appear.
In silence build our bowers,
And leaf by leaf in silence shew, till we laugh atop,
sweet Flowers !

The dear lumpish baby,
Humming with the May-bee,
Hails us with his bright stare, stumbling through
The honey-dropping moon, [the grass ;
On a night in June,
Kisses our pale pathway leaves, that felt the bride-
Age, the wither'd clinger, [groom pass.
On us mutely gazes,
And wraps the thought of his last bed in his child-
hood's daisies.

See, and scorn all duller
 Taste, how heav'n loves colour,
 How great Nature, clearly, joys in red and green ;
 What sweet thoughts she thinks
 Of violets and pinks,
 And a thousand flushing hues, made solely to be seen ;
 See her whitest lilies
 Chill the silver showers, [the flowers !
 And what a red mouth has her rose, the woman of

Uselessness divinest
 Of a use the finest
 Painteth us, the teachers of the end of use ;
 Travellers weary-eyed
 Bless us far and wide ;
 Unto sick and prison'd thoughts we give sudden
 Not a poor town window [truce ;
 Loves its sickliest planting,
 But its wall speaks loftier truth than Babylon's
 whole vaunting.

Sage are yet the uses
 Mix'd with our sweet juices,
 Whether man or may-fly profit of the balm ;
 As fair fingers heal'd
 Knights from the olden field,
 We hold cups of mightiest force to give the wildest
 E'en the terror Poison [calm.
 Hath its plea for blooming ;
 Life it gives to reverent lips, though death to the
 presuming.

And oh ! our sweet soul-taker,
 That thief the honey-maker,
 What a house hath he, by the thymy glen !
 In his talking rooms
 How the feasting fumes,
 Till his gold cups overflow to the mouths of men !

The butterflies come aping
 Those fine thieves of ours,
 And flutter round our rifled tops, like tickled flowers
 with flowers.

See those tops, how beauteous !
 What fair service duteous
 Round some idol waits, as on their lord the Nine ?
 Elfin court 'twould seem ;
 And taught perchance that dream,
 Which the old Greek mountain dreamt upon nights
 To expound such wonder [divine.
 Human speech avails not ;
 Yet there dies no poorest weed, that such a glory
 exhales not.

Think of all these treasures,
 Matchless works and pleasures,
 Every one a marvel, more than thought can say ;
 Then think in what bright show'rs
 We thicken fields and bowers,
 And with what heaps of sweetness half stifle wan-
 Think of the mossy forests [ton May :
 By the bee-birds haunted,
 And all those Amazonian plains, lone lying as
 enchanted.

Trees themselves are ours ;
 Fruits are born of flowers ;
 Peach and roughest nut were blossoms in the spring ;
 The lusty bee knows well
 The news, and comes pell-mell,
 And dances in the bloomy thicks with darksome
 antheming.
 Beneath the very burthen
 Of planet-pressing ocean
 We wash our smiling cheeks in peace, a thought for
 meek devotion.

Tears of Phœbus,—missings
 Of Cytherea's kissings,
 Have in us been found, and wise men find them still ;
 Drooping grace unfurls
 Still Hyacinthus' curls,
 And Narcissus loves himself in the selfish rill ;
 Thy red lip, Adonis,
 Still is wet with morning ;
 And the step that bled for thee, the rosy briar adorning.

Oh, true things are fables,
 Fit for sagest tables,
 And the flowers are true things, yet no fables they ;
 Fables were not more
 Bright, nor lov'd of yore,
 Yet they grew not, like the flow'rs, by every old
 Grossest hand can test us ; [pathway.
 Fools may prize us never ;
 Yet we rise, and rise, and rise, marvels sweet for ever.

Who shall say that flowers
 Dress not heav'n's own bowers ?
 Who its love, without them, can fancy,—or sweet
 Who shall even dare floor ?
 To say we sprang not there,
 And came not down that Love might bring one piece
 of heav'n the more ?
 Oh pray believe that angels
 From those blue dominions
 Brought us in their white laps down, 'twixt their
 golden pinions.

SONNETS.

TO

THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET.

GREEN little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,
Sole voice that 's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class
With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass ;

Oh sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,
One to the fields, the other to the hearth, [strong
Both have your sunshine ; both, though small, are
At your clear hearts ; and both seem given to earth
To ring in thoughtful ears this natural song—
In doors and out, summer and winter, Mirth.

ON A LOCK OF MILTON'S HAIR.

IT lies before me there, and my own breath
Stirs its thin outer threads, as though beside
The living head I stood in honour'd pride,
Talking of lovely things that conquer death.

Perhaps he press'd it once, or underneath
 Ran his fine fingers, when he leant, blank-eyed,
 And saw, in fancy, Adam and his bride
 With their rich locks, or his own Delphic wreath.

There seems a love in hair, though it be dead.
 It is the gentlest, yet the strongest thread
 Of our frail plant,—a blossom from the tree
 Surviving the proud trunk ;—as though it said
 Patience and Gentleness is Power. In me
 Behold affectionate eternity.

QUIET EVENINGS.

TO THOMAS BARNES, ESQ.

WRITTEN FROM HAMPSTEAD.

DEAR Barnes, whose native taste, solid and clear,
 The throng of life has strengthen'd without harm,
 You know the rural feeling, and the charm
 That stillness has for a world-fretted ear :
 'Tis now deep whispering all about me here
 With thousand tiny hushings, like a swarm
 Of atom bees, or fairies in alarm,
 Or noise of numerous bliss from distant sphere.

This charm our evening hours duly restore,—
 Nought heard through all our little, lull'd abode,
 Save the crisp fire, or leaf of book turn'd o'er,
 Or watch-dog, or the ring of frosty road.
 Wants there no other sound then?—Yes, one more,—
 The voice of friendly visiting, long owed.

TO KOSCIUSKO,

WHO NEVER FOUGHT EITHER FOR BUONAPARTE OR THE ALIIES.

'Tis like thy patient valour thus to keep,
 Great Kosciusko, to the rural shade,
 While Freedom's ill-found amulet still is made
 Pretence for old aggression, and a heap
 Of selfish mockeries. There, as in the sweep
 Of stormier fields, thou earnest with thy blade,
 Transform'd, not inly alter'd, to the spade,
 Thy never yielding right to a calm sleep.

There came a wanderer, borne from land to land
 Upon a couch, pale, many-wounded, mild,
 His brow with patient pain dulcetly sour.
 Men stoop'd with awful sweetness on his hand,
 And kiss'd it; and collected Virtue smiled,
 To think how sovereign her enduring hour.*

TO THE AUTHOR OF "ION."

I.

I COULD not come to shed a man's rare tears
 With those who honour'd, and who lov'd, thy play;
 My heart said "yes," but the sick room said "nay,"
 And the good doctor with his earnest fears.

* The author heard Mrs. West (the artist's wife) very agreeably say,—“The Duke of Bedford came in while my husband was painting Kosciusko's portrait. He stooped down upon the General's hand as he reclined on the sofa, and kissed it; and *I fell in love with him.*”—This was Francis, fifth Duke of Bedford, whose statue is in Russell Square.

Yet I was with thee,—saw thine high compeers,
Wordsworth and Landor,—saw the piled array,
The many-visag'd heart, looking one way,
Come to drink beauteous truth at eyes and ears.

Now said I to myself,—The scenes arise ;
Now comes the sweet of name* whom great Love
sunders
From love itself ; now, now he gives the skies
The heart *they* gave (sweet thought 'gainst bitter
wonders !)
And ever and aye, hands, stung with tear-thrill'd eyes,
Snapping the silence, burst in crashing thunders.

II.

Yes, I beheld the old accustom'd sight,
Pit, boxes, galleries ; I was at “ the play ; ”
I saw uprise the stage's strange floor-day,
And music tuning as in tune's despite ;
Childhood I saw, glad-faced, that squeezeth tight
One's hand, while the rapt curtain soars away,—
And beauty and age, and all that piled array—
Thousands of souls drawn to one wise delight.

A noble spectacle !—Noble in mirth—
Nobler in sacred fellowship of tears !
I've often ask'd myself what sight on earth
Is worth the fancying of our fellow spheres ;
And this is one—whole hosts in love with worth,
Judging the shapes of their own hopes and fears.

III.

Fine age is ours, and marvellous—setting free
Hopes that were bending into grey despairs,
Winnowing iron like chaff, outspeeding the airs,
Conquering with smoky flag the winds at sea,

* Ion signifies a violet.

Flinging from thund'rous wheels, immeasurably,
 Knowledge like daily light : so that man stares,
 Planet-struck with his work-day world, nor dares
 Repeat the old babble of what " shall never be."

A great good age !—Greatest and best in this,—
 That it strikes dumb the old anti-creeds, which
 parted

Man from the child—prosperity from the bliss
 Of faith in good—and toil of wealth unthwarted
 From leisure crown'd with bay, such as thine is,
 Talfourd ! a lawyer prosperous and young-hearted.

THE FISH, THE MAN, AND THE SPIRIT.

—♦—
 TO FISH.

You strange, astonish'd-looking, angle-faced,
 Dreary-mouth'd, gaping wretches of the sea,
 Gulping salt-water everlastingly,
 Cold-blooded, though with red your blood be graced,
 And mute, though dwellers in the roaring waste ;
 And you, all shapes beside, that fishy be,—
 Some round, some flat, some long, all devilry,
 Legless, unloving, infamously chaste :—

O scaly, slippery, wet, swift, staring wights,
 What is 't ye do ? what life lead ? eh, dull goggles ?
 How do ye vary your vile days and nights ?
 How pass your Sundays ? Are ye still but joggles
 In ceaseless wash ? Still nought but gapes, and
 bites,
 And drinks, and stares, diversified with boggles ?

A FISH ANSWERS.

Amazing monster ! that, for aught I know,
 With the first sight of thee didst make our race
 For ever stare ! O flat and shocking face,
 Grimly divided from the breast below !
 Thou that on dry land horribly dost go
 With a split body and most ridiculous pace,
 Prong after prong, disgracer of all grace,
 Long-useless-finn'd, hair'd, upright, unwet, slow !

O breather of unbreathable, sword-sharp air,
 How canst exist ? How bear thyself, thou dry
 And dreary sloth ! What particle canst share
 Of the only blessed life, the watery ?
 I sometimes see of ye an actual *pair*
 Go by ! link'd fin by fin ! most odiously.

The Fish turns into a Man, and then into a Spirit, and again speaks.

Indulge thy smiling scorn, if smiling still,
 O man ! and loathe, but with a sort of love :
 For difference must its use by difference prove,
 And, in sweet clang, the spheres with music fill.
 One of the spirits am I, that at his will
 Live in whate'er has life—fish, eagle, dove—
 No hate, no pride, beneath nought, nor above,
 A visitor of the rounds of God's sweet skill.

Man's life is warm, glad, sad, 'twixt loves and
 graves,
 Boundless in hope, honour'd with pangs austere,
 Heaven-gazing ; and his angel-wings he craves :—
 The fish is swift, small-needing, vague yet clear,
 A cold, sweet, silver life, wrapp'd in round waves,
 Quicken'd with touches of transporting fear.

BLANK VERSE.

P A G A N I N I.

A FRAGMENT.

* * * * *

So play'd of late to every passing thought
With finest change (might I but half as well
So write !) the pale magician of the bow,
Who brought from Italy the tales, made true,
Of Grecian lyres ; and on his spherie hand,
Loading the air with dumb expectancy,
Suspended, ere it fell, a nation's breath.

He smote,—and clinging to the serious chords
With godlike ravishment, drew forth a breath,
So deep, so strong, so fervid thick with love,
Blissful, yet laden as with twenty prayers,
That Juno yearn'd with no diviner soul
To the first burthen of the lips of Jove.

The exceeding mystery of the loveliness
Sadden'd delight ; and with his mournful look,
Dreary and gaunt, hanging his pallid face
'Twixt his dark flowing locks, he almost seem'd,
To feeble or to melancholy eyes,
One that had parted with his soul for pride,
And in the sable secret liv'd forlorn.

But true and earnest, all too happily

That skill dwelt in him, serious with its joy ;
For noble now he smote the exulting strings,
And bade them march before his stately will ;
And now he lov'd them like a cheek, and laid
Endearment on them, and took pity sweet ;
And now he was all mirth, or all for sense
And reason, carving out his thoughts like prose
After his poetry ; or else he laid
His own soul prostrate at the feet of love,
And with a full and trembling fervour deep,
In kneeling and close-creeping urgency,
Implor'd some mistress with hot tears ; which past,
And after patience had brought right of peace,
He drew, as if from thoughts finer than hope,
Comfort around him in ear-soothing strains
And elegant composure ; or he turn'd
To heaven instead of earth, and rais'd a pray'r
So earnest vehement, yet so lowly sad,
Mighty with want and all poor human tears,
That never saint, wrestling with earthly love,
And in mid-age unable to get free,
Tore down from heav'n such pity. Or behold,
In his despair, (for such, from what he spoke
Of grief before it, or of love, 'twould seem,)
Jump would he into some strange wail uncouth
Of witches' dance, ghastly with whinings thin
And palsied nods—mirth wicked, sad, and weak.
And then with show of skill mechanical,
Marvellous as witchcraft, he would overthrow
That vision with a show'r of notes like hail,
Or sudden mixtures of all difficult things
Never yet heard ; flashing the sharp tones now,
In downward leaps like swords ; now rising fine
Into some utmost tip of minute sound,
From whence he stepp'd into a higher and higher
On viewless points, till laugh took leave of him :
Or he would fly as if from all the world
To be alone and happy, and you should hear

His instrument become a tree far off,
 A nest of birds and sunbeams, sparkling both,
 A cottage-bow'r : or he would condescend,
 In playful wisdom which knows no contempt,
 To bring to laughing memory, plain as sight,
 A farm-yard with its inmates, ox and lamb,
 The whistle and the whip, with feeding hens
 In household fidget muttering evermore,
 And, rising as in scorn, crown'd Chanticleer,
 Ordaining silence with his sovereign crow.
 Then from one chord of his amazing shell
 Would he fetch out the voice of quires, and weight
 Of the built organ ; or some two-fold strain
 Moving before him in sweet-going yoke,
 Ride like an Eastern conqueror, round whose state
 Some light Morisco leaps with his guitar ;
 And ever and anon o'er these he'd throw
 Jets of small notes like pearl, or like the pelt
 Of lovers' sweetmeats on Italian lutes
 From windows on a feast-day, or the leaps
 Of pebbled water, sprinkled in the sun,
 One chord effecting all :—and when the ear
 Felt there was nothing present but himself
 And silence, and the wonder drew deep sighs,
 Then would his bow lie down again in tears,
 And speak to some one in a pray'r of love,
 Endless, and never from his heart to go :
 Or he would talk as of some secret bliss,
 And at the close of all the wonderment [come
 (Which himself shar'd) near and more near would
 Into the inmost ear, and whisper there
 Breathings so soft, so low, so full of life,
 Touch'd beyond sense, and only to be borne
 By pauses which made each less bearable,
 That out of pure necessity for relief
 From that heap'd joy, and bliss that laugh'd for pain,
 The thunder of th' uprolling house came down,
 And bow'd the breathing sorcerer into smiles.

OUR COTTAGE.

SOME few of us, children and grown, possess
A cottage, far remov'd. 'Tis in a glade,
Where the sun harbours ; and one side of it
Listens to bees, another to a brook.
Lovers, that have just parted for the night,
Dream of such spots, when they have said their
 pray'rs,—
Or some tir'd parent, holding by the hand
A child, and walking tow'rds the setting sun.

No news comes here ; no scandal ; no routine
Of morning visit ; not a postman's knock,—
That double thrust of the long staff of care.
We are as distant from the world, in spirit
If not in place, as though in Crusoe's isle,
And please ourselves with being ignorant
Ev'n of the country some five miles beyond.
Our wood's our world, with some few hills and dales,
And many an alley green, with poppies edg'd
And flowery brakes, where sails the long blue fly,
Whom we pronounce a fairy ; and 'twould go
Hard with us to be certain he's not one,
Such willing children are we of the possible.
Hence all our walks have names ; some of the Fairies,
And some of Nymphs, (where the brook makes a bath
In a green chamber, and the turf's half violets,)
And some of Grim Old Men that live alone,
And may not be seen safely. Pan has one
Down in a beech-dell ; and Apollo another,
Where sunset in the trees makes strawy fires.

You might suppose the place pick'd out of books.
 The nightingales, in the cold blooms, are there
 Fullest of heart, hushing our open'd windows ;
 The cuckoo ripest in the warmed thicks.
 Autumn, the princely season, purple-rob'd
 And liberal-handed, brings no gloom to us,
 But, rich in its own self, gives us rich hope
 Of winter-time ; and when the winter comes,
 We burn old wood, and read old books that wall
 Our biggest room, and take our heartiest walks
 On the good, hard, glad ground ; or when it rains
 And the rich dells are mire, make much and long
 Of a small bin we have of good old wine ;
 And talk of, perhaps entertain, some friend,
 Whom, old or young, we gift with the same grace
 Of ancient epithet ; for love is time
 With us ; youth old as love, and age as young ;
 And stars, affections, hopes, roll all alike
 Immortal rounds, in heaven when not on earth.
 Therefore the very youngest of us all
 Do we call old,—“ old Vincent,” or “ old Jule,”
 Or “ old Jacintha ;” and they count us young,
 And at a very playfellow time of life,
 As in good truth we are : witness the nuts
 We seek, to pelt with, in thy trampled leaves,
 November ; and the merry Christmas ring,
 Hot-fac'd and loud with too much fire and food,—
 The rare excess, loving the generous gods.
 “ Old Mary,” and “ old Percy,” and “ old Henry,”
 Also there are, with more beyond their teens ;
 But these are reverend youngsters, married now,
 And ride no longer to our cottage nest
 On that unbridled horse, their father's knee.

Custom itself is an old friend with us ;
 Though change we make a friend, too, if it come
 To better custom : nay, to bury him,
 Provided soul be gone, and it be done

Rev'rently and kindly ; and we then install
 His son, or set a new one in his place ;
 For all good honest customs, from all lands,
 Find welcome here,—seats built up in old elms
 From France ; and evening dances on the green ;
 And servants (home's inhabiting strangers) turn'd
 To zealous friends ; and gipsy meals, whose smoke
 Warms houseless glades ; and the good bout
 Chinese

At pen and ink, in rhyming summer bow'rs,
 Temper'd with pleasant penalties of wine.
 The villagers love us ; and on Sabbath-days,
 (Such luck is ours, and round harmonious life)
 In an old, ivied church (which God preserve,
 And make a mark for ever of the love
 That by mild acquiescence bears all change
 And keeps all better'd good !) no priest like ours
 Utters such Christian lore, so final sweet,
 So fit for audience in those flowery dells.
 Not a young heart feels strange, nor old misgives :
 You scarcely can help thinking, that the sound
 Must pierce with sweetness to the very graves.

But mark—not the whole week do we pass thus,—
 No, nor whole day. Heav'n, for ease' sake, forbid !
 Half of the day (and half of that might serve,
 Were all the world active and just as we)
 Is mix'd with the great throng, playing its part
 Of toil and pain ; we could not relish else
 Our absolute comfort ; nay, should almost fear
 Heav'n counted us not worthy to partake
 The common load with its great hopes for all,
 But held us flimsy triflers—gnats i' the sun—
 Made but for play, and so to die, unheav'n'd.
 Oh, hard we work, and carefully we think,
 And much we suffer ! but the line being drawn
 'Twixt work and our earth's heav'n, well do we
 draw it,

Sudden, and sharp, and sweet ; and in an instant
 Are borne away, like knights to fairy isles,
 And close our gates behind us on the world.

“And where (cries some one) is this blessed spot?
 May I behold it? May I gain admittance?”

Yes, *with a thought* ;—*as we do*.

“Woe is me!

Then no such place exists!”

None such to us,

Except in thought ; but *that*—

“Is true as fiction?”

Aye, true as tears or smiles that fiction makes,
 Waking the ready heaven in men’s eyes ;—
 True as effect to cause ;—true as the hours
 You spend in joy while sitting at a play.
 Is there no truth in those? Or was your heart
 Happier before you went there? Oh, if rich
 In what you deem life’s only solid goods,
 Think what unjoyous blanks ev’n those would be,
 Were fancy’s light smitten from out your world,
 With all its colourings of your prides, your gains,
 Your very toys and tea-cups,—nothing left
 But what *you* touch, and not what *touches you*.
 The wise are often rich in little else,
 The rich, if wise, count it their gold of gold.
 Say, is it not so, thou who art both rich
 In the world’s eye, and wise in solitude’s,—
 Stoneleigh’s poetic lord, whose gentle name
 No echo granted at the font to mine,
 I trust, shall have made ruder. What would’st care,
 O Leigh, for all the wooden matter-o’-fact
 Of all thine oaks, depriv’d of what thy muse
 Can do to wake their old oracular breath,
 Or whisper, with their patriarch locks, of heaven?
 Lo! Southwood Smith, physician of mankind,

Bringer of light and air to the rich poor
 Of the next age :—he, when in real woods
 He rests the mildest energy alive,
 Scorns not these fancied ones, but hails and loves
 A vision of the dawn of his own world.
 Horace Smith lo ! rare compound, skill'd alike
 In worldly gain and its unworldliest use :
 He prospers in the throng, makes fact his slave,
 Then leads a life with fiction and good deeds.
 Lo ! Bulwer, genius in the thick of fame,
 With smiles of thrones, and echoes from the Rhine,
 He too extends his grounds to Fairy-land,
 And while his neighbours think they see him
 looking
 Hard at themselves, is in Armorica,
 Feasting with lovers in enchanted bowers.
 Lo ! Jeffrey the fine wit, the judge revered,
 The man belov'd, what spirit invokes he
 To make his hasty moments of repose
 Richest and farthest off ?—The Muse of Keats,
 One of the inmost dwellers in the core
 Of the old woods, when Nymphs and Graces liv'd,—
 Where still they live, to eyes, like their's, divine.

Fancy 's the wealth of wealth, the toiler's hope,
 The poor man's piecer-out ; the art of Nature,
 Painting her landscapes twice ; the spirit of fact,
 As matter is the body ; the pure gift
 Of heav'n to poet and to child ; which he
 Who retains most in manhood, being a man
 In all things fitting else, is most a man ;
 Because he wants no human faculty,
 Nor loses one sweet taste of the sweet world.

A HEAVEN UPON EARTH

FRAGMENT OF AN UNPUBLISHED PLAY. A HUSBAND IS CON-
VERSING WITH HIS WIFE.

FOR there are two heavens, sweet,
Both made of love,—one, inconceivable
Ev'n by the other, so divine it is ;
The other, far on *this* side of the stars,
By men call'd *home*, when some blest pair are met
As we are now ; sometimes in happy talk,
Sometimes in silence (also a sort of talk,
Where friends are match'd) each at its gentle task
Of book, or household need, or meditation,
By summer-moon, or curtain'd fire in frost ;
And by degrees there come,—not always come,
Yet mostly,—other, smaller inmates there,
Cherubic-fac'd, yet growing like those two,
Their pride and playmates, not without meek fear,
Since God sometimes to his own cherubim
'Takes those sweet cheeks of earth. And so 'twixt
joy,
And love, and tears, and whatsoever pain
Man fitly shares with man, these two grow old ;
And if indeed blest thoroughly, they die
In the same spot, and nigh the same good hour,
And setting suns look heavenly on their grave.—

REFLECTIONS OF A DEAD BODY.

SCENE.—*A female sitting by a bed-side, anxiously looking at the face of her husband, just dead. The soul within the dead body soliloquizes.*

WHAT change is this ! What joy ! What depth of
What suddenness of withdrawal from all pain [rest !
Into all bliss ? into a balm so perfect
I do not even smile ! I tried but now,
With that breath's end, to speak to the dear face
That watches me—and lo ! all in an instant,
Instead of toil, and a weak, weltering tear,
I am all peace, all happiness, all power,
Laid on some throne in space.—Great God ! I am
dead.

[*A pause.*] Dear God ! thy love is perfect ; thy
truth known.

[*Another.*] And He,—and they !—How simple
and strange ! How beautiful !

But I may whisper it not,—even to thought ;
Lest strong imagination, hearing it,
Speak, and the world be shatter'd.

[*Soul again pauses.*] O balm ! O bliss ! O satu-
rating smile

Unsmiling ! O doubt ended ! certainty
Begun ! O will, faultless, yet all indulged,
Encourag'd to be wilful ;—to delay
Even its wings for heav'n ; and thus to rest
Here, here, ev'n here,—'twixt heav'n and earth
awhile,
A bed in the morn of endless happiness

I feel warm drops falling upon my face :
 They reach me through the rapture of this cold.
 —My wife ! my love !—'tis for the best thou canst
 not

Know how I know thee weeping, and how fond
 A kiss meets thine in these unowning lips.
 Ah, truly was my love what thou didst hope it,
 And more ; and so was thine—I read it all—
 And our small feuds were but impatiences
 At seeing the dear truth ill understood.
 Poor sweet ! thou blamest now thyself, and heapest
 Memory on memory of imagin'd wrong,
 As I should have done too,—as all who love ;
 And yet I cannot pity thee :—so well
 I know the end, and how thou 'lt smile hereafter.

She speaks my name at last, as though she fear'd
 The terrible, familiar sound ; and sinks
 In sobs upon my bosom. Hold me fast,
 Hold me fast, sweet, and from the extreme grow
 calm,—
 Me, cruelly unmov'd, and yet how loving !

How wrong I was to quarrel with poor James !
 And how dear Francis mistook *me* ! That pride,
 How without ground it was ! Those arguments,
 Which I suppos'd so final, oh how foolish !
 Yet gentlest Death will not permit rebuke,
 Ev'n of one's self. They 'll know all, as I know,
 When they lie thus.

Colder I grow, and happier.
 Warmness and sense are drawing to a point,
 Ere they depart ;—myself quitting myself.
 The soul gathers its wings upon the edge
 Of the new world, yet how assuredly !
 Oh ! how in balm I change ! actively will'd,
 Yet passive, quite ; and feeling opposites mingle
 In exquisitest peace !—Those fleshly clothes,

Which late I thought myself, lie more and more
 Apart from this warm, sweet, retreating me,
 Who am as a hand, withdrawing from a glove.

So lay my mother : so my father : so
 My children : yet I pitied them. I wept,
 And fancied them in graves, and call'd them "poor!"

O graves! O tears! O knowledge, will, and time,
 And fear, and hope! what petty terms of earth
 Were ye! yet how I love ye as of earth,
 The planet's household words; and how postpone,
 Till out of these dear arms, th'immeasurable
 Tongue of the all-possessing smile eternal!
 Ah, not excluding these, nor aught that's past,
 Nor aught that's present, nor that's yet to come,
 Well waited for. I would not stir a finger
 Out of this rest, to re-assure all anguish;
 Such warrant hath it; such divine conjuncture;
 Such a charm binds it with the needs of bliss.

That was my eldest boy's—that kiss. And that
 The baby with its little unweening mouth;
 And those—and those—Dear hearts! they have all
 come,
 And think me dead—me, who so know I'm living,
 The vitalest creature in this fleshly room.
 I part; and with my spirit's eyes, full open'd,
 Will look upon them.

*[Spirit parts from the body, and breathes upon
 their eyes.]*

Patient be those tears,
 Fresh heart-dews, standing on these dear clay-moulds
 Of souls made of myself,—made of us both
 In the half-heavenly time. I quit ye but
 To meet again, and will revisit soon
 In many a dream, and many a gentle sigh.

[Spirit looks at the body.]

And was that me?—that hollow-cheek'd pale thing,
 Shatter'd with passions, worn with cares ; now placid
 With my divine departure ? And must love
 Think of thee painfully ? of stifling boards
 'Gainst the free face, and of the irreverent worm ?
 To dust with thee, poor corpse ! to dust and grass,
 And the glad innocent worm, that does its duty
 As thou dost thine in changing. I thy life,
 Life of thy life, bird of the bird, ah ha !
 Turn my face forth to heav'n—ah ha ! ah ha !
 Oh the infinitude and the eternity !
 The dimpled air ! the measureless conscious heaven !
 The endless possession ! the sweet, mad, fawning
 planets

[It speaks with a hurried vehemence of rapture.

Sleeking, like necks, round the beatitudes of the
 ubiquitous sun-god
 With bee-music of innumerable organ-thunders,
 And the travelling crowds this way, like a life-
 tempest,
 With rapid angelical faces, two in one,
 Ah ah ! ah ha ! and the stillness beyond the stars—
 My Friend ! my Mother !—I mingle through the
 roar.

[Spirit vanishes.

TRANSLATIONS.

THE

INFANT HERCULES AND THE SERPENTS.

FROM THEOCRITUS.

Juno, jealous of the child which Jupiter has had by Alcmena, sends two dreadful serpents to devour the boy. The serpents come upon him while he and his half-brother Iphiclus, the son of Amphitryon, are sleeping together. Iphiclus, the child of the mortal father, is terrified: Hercules, the infant demi-god, seizes and destroys them, as if they were living playthings. His mother consults the prophet Tiresias on the occasion, and is told of her son's future renown.

Young Hercules had now beheld the light
Only ten months, when once upon a night,
Alcmena, having wash'd, and given the breast
To both her heavy boys, laid them to rest.
Their cradle was a noble shield of brass,
Won by her lord from slaughtered Pterelas.
Gently she laid them down, and gently laid
Her hand on both their heads, and yearn'd, and said,
"Sleep, sleep, my boys, a light and pleasant sleep;
My little souls, my twins, my guard and keep!
Sleep happy, and wake happy!" And she kept
Rocking the mighty buckler, and they slept.

At midnight, when the Bear went down, and broad
Orion's shoulder lit the starry road,

There came, careering through the opening halls,
 On livid spires, two dreadful animals—
 Serpents ; whom Juno, threatening as she drove,
 Had sent there to devour the boy of Jove.
 Orbing their blood-fed bellies in and out,
 They tower'd along ; and as they look'd about,
 An evil fire out of their eyes came lamping ;
 A heavy poison dropt about their champing.

And now they have arriv'd, and think to fall
 To their dread meal, when lo ! (for Jove sees all),
 The house is lit, as with the morning's break,
 And the dear children of Alcmena wake.
 The younger one, as soon as he beheld
 The evil creatures coming on the shield,
 And saw their loathsome teeth, began to cry
 And shriek, and kick away the clothes, and try
 All his poor little instincts of escape ;
 The other, grappling, seiz'd them by the nape
 Of either poisonous neck, for all their twists,
 And held, like iron, in his little fists.
 Buckled and bound he held them, struggling wild,
 And so they wound about the boy, the child,
 The long-begetting boy, the suckling dear,
 That never teaz'd his nurses with a tear.

Tired out at length, they trail their spires and gasp
 Lock'd in that young indissoluble grasp.

Alcmena heard the noise, and "Wake," she cried,
 "Amphitryon, wake, for terror holds me tied !
 Up ; stay not for the sandals : hark ! the child,
 The youngest—how he shrieks ! The babe is wild :
 And see, the walls and windows ! 'Tis as light
 As if 'twere day, and yet 'tis surely night.
 There's something dreadful in the house ; there is
 Indeed, dear husband !" He arose at this ;
 And seiz'd his noble sword, which overhead
 Was always hanging at the cedar-bed :

The hilt he grasp'd in one hand, and the sheath
In t'other ; and drew forth the blade of death.

All in an instant, like a stroke of doom,
Returning midnight smote upon the room.

Amphitryon call'd ; and woke from heavy sleep
His household, who lay breathing hard and deep ;
“ Bring lights here from the hearth ! lights, lights ;
and guard
The doorways ; rise, ye ready labourers hard ! ”

He said ; and lights came pouring in, and all
The busy house was up, in bower and hall ;
But when they saw the little suckling, how
He grasp'd the monsters, and with earnest brow
Kept beating them together, plaything-wise,
They shriek'd aloud ; but he, with laughing eyes,
Soon as he saw Amphitryon, leap'd and sprung
Childlike, and at his feet the dead disturbers flung.

Then did Alcmena to her bosom take
Her feebler boy, who could not cease to shake.
The other son Amphitryon took and laid
Beneath a fleece ; and so return'd to bed.

Soon as the cock with his thrice-echoing cheer
Told that the gladness of the day was near,
Alcmena sent for old, truth-uttering
Tiresias ; and she told him all this thing,
And bade him say what she might think and do ;
“ Nor do thou fear,” said she, “ to let me know,
Although the mighty gods should meditate
Aught ill ; for man can never fly from Fate.
And thus thou seest” (and here her smiling eyes
Look'd through a blush) “ how well I teach the
wise.”

So spoke the queen. Then he, with glad old tone ;
 “ Be of good heart, thou blessed bearing one,
 True blood of Persens ; for by my sweet sight,
 Which once divided these poor lids with light,
 Many Greek women, as they sit and weave
 The gentle thread across their knees at eve,
 Shall sing of thee and thy beloved name ;
 Thou shalt be blest by every Argive dame :
 For unto this thy son it shall be given
 With his broad heart to win his way to heaven ;
 Twelve labours shall he work ; and all accurst
 And brutal things o’erthrow, brute men the worst
 And in Trachinia shall the funeral pyre
 Purge his mortalities away with fire,
 And he shall mount amid the stars, and be
 Acknowledg’d kin to those who envied thee,
 And sent these den-born shapes to crush his
 destiny.”

GREEK PRETENDERS TO PHILOSOPHY DESCRIBED.

FROM THE ANTHOLOGY.

(The original is in similar compound words.)

Lofty-brow-flourishers,
 Nose-in-beard-wallowers,
 Bag-and-beard-nourishers,
 Dish-and-all-swallowers ;
 Old-cloak-investitors,
 Barefoot-lookfashioners,
 Night-private-feasteaters,
 Craft-lucubrationers ;
 Youth-cheaters, word-catchers, vaingloryosophers,
 Such are such seekers of virtue, philosophers.

CUPID SWALLOWED!

A PARAPHRASE FROM THE SAME.

T'OTHER day as I was twining
Roses, for a crown to dine in,
What, of all things, 'midst the heap
Should I light on, fast asleep,
But the little desperate elf,
The tiny traitor, Love himself!
By the wings I pinch'd him up
Like a bee, and in a cup
Of my wine I plung'd and sank him,
And what d' ye think I did?—I drank him.
'Faith, I thought him dead. Not he!
There he lives with tenfold glee;
And now this moment with his wings
I feel him tickling my heart-strings.

CATULLUS'S RETURN HOME

TO THE PENINSULA OF SIRMIO.

O BEST of all the scatter'd spots that lie
In sea or lake,—apple of landscape's eye,—
How gladly do I drop within thy nest,
With what a sight of full, contented rest,
Scarce able to believe my journey o'er,
And that these eyes behold thee safe once more!

Oh where's the luxury like the smile at heart,
 When the mind, breathing, lays its load apart,—
 When we come home again, tir'd out, and spread
 The loosen'd limbs o'er all the wish'd-for bed !
 This, this alone is worth an age of toil.
 Hail, lovely Sirmio ! Hail, paternal soil !
 Joy, my bright waters, joy ; your master's come !
 Laugh, every dimple on the cheek of home !

SONG OF FAIRIES ROBBING AN ORCHARD.

FROM SOME LATIN VERSES IN THE OLD ENGLISH DRAMA OF
 "AMYNTAS, OR THE IMPOSSIBLE DOWRY."

—•—

WE the Fairies, blithe and antic,
 Of dimensions not gigantic,
 Though the moonshine mostly keep us,
 Oft in orchards frisk and peep us.

Stolen sweets are always sweeter,
 Stolen kisses much completer,
 Stolen looks are nice in chapels,
 Stolen, stolen be your apples.

When to bed the world are bobbing,
 Then 's the time for orchard robbing ;
 Yet the fruit were scarce worth peeling
 Were it not for stealing, stealing.

THE JOVIAL PRIEST'S CONFESSION.

THERE is already an imitation by Mr. Huddesford of the following reverend piece of wit; and one of the passages in it beats any thing in the present version. It is the beginning of the last stanza,—

Mysterious and prophetic truths
I never could unfold 'em,
Without a flagon of good wine,
And a slice of cold ham.

The translation here offered to the reader is intended to be a more literal picture of the original, and to retain more of its intermixture of a grave and churchman-like style. The original is preserved in the *Remains* of the learned Camden, who says, in his pleasant way, that “Walter de Mapes, Archdeacon of Oxford, who, in the time of King Henry the Second, filled England with his merriments, confessed his love to good liquor in this manner:”—

I DEVISE to end my days—in a tavern drinking;
May some Christian hold for me—the glass when I
am shrinking; [sinking,
That the Cherubim may cry—when they see me
God be merciful to a soul—of this gentleman's way
of thinking.

A glass of wine amazingly—enlighteneth one's in-
ternals; [supernals;
'Tis wings bedewed with nectar—that fly up to
Bottles cracked in taverns—have much the sweeter
kernels,
Than the sups allowed to us—in the college journals.

Every one by nature hath—a mould which he was
cast in; [fasting;
I happen to be one of those—who never could write

By a single little boy—I should be surpass'd in
Writing so: I'd just as lief—be buried, tomb'd and
grass'd in.

Every one by nature hath—a gift too, a dotation:
I, when I make verses,—do get the inspiration
Of the very best of wine—that comes into the nation:
It maketh sermons to abound—for edification.

Just as liquor floweth good—floweth forth my lay so;
But I must moreover eat—or I could not say so;
Nought it availeth inwardly—should I write all
day so;
But with God's grace after meat—I beat Ovidius Naso.

Neither is there given to me—prophetic animation,
Unless when I have eat and drank—yea, ev'n to
saturation;
Then in my upper story—hath Bacchus domination,
And Phœbus rusheth into me, and beggareth all
relation.

EPITAPH ON EROTION.

FROM MARTIAL.

—•—

UNDERNEATH this greedy stone
Lies little sweet Erotion;
Whom the Fates, with hearts as cold,
Nipp'd away at six years old.
Thou, whoever thou may'st be,
That hast this small field after me,
Let the yearly rites be paid
To her little slender shade;
So shall no disease or jar
Hurt thy house, or chill thy Lar;
But this tomb here be alone,
The only melancholy stone.

PLATO'S ARCHETYPAL MAN.

ACCORDING TO THE IDEA OF IT ENTERTAINED BY
ARISTOTLE.

FROM THE LATIN OF MILTON.

—♦—
SAY, guardian goddesses of woods,
Aspects felt in solitudes,
And Memory, at whose blessed knee
The Nine, which thy dear daughters be,
Learnt of the majestic past ;
And thou, that in some antre vast
Leaning afar off dost lie,
Otiose Eternity,
Keeping the tablets and decrees
Of Jove, and the ephemerides
Of the gods, and calendars
Of the ever festal stars ;
Say, who was he, the sunless shade,
After whose pattern man was made ;
He first, the full of ages, born
With the old pale polar morn,
Sole, yet all ; first visible thought,
After which the Deity wrought ?
Twin-birth with Pallas, not remain
Doth he in Jove's o'ershadow'd brain,
But though of wide communion,
Dwells apart, like one alone,
And fills the wondering embrace
(Doubt it not) of size and place.
Whether, companion of the stars,
With their ten-fold round he errs ;
Or inhabits with his lone
Nature in the neighbouring moon ;

Or sits with body-waiting souls,
 Dozing by the Lethæan pools :—
 Or whether, haply, placed afar
 In some blank region of our star,
 He stalks, an unsubstantial heap,
 Humanity's giant archetype ;
 Where a loftier bulk he rears
 Than Atlas, grappler of the stars,
 And through their shadow-touch'd abodes
 Brings a terror to the gods.
 Not the seer of him had sight,
 Who found in darkness depths of light ;*
 His travell'd eyeballs saw him not
 In all his mighty gulphs of thought :—
 Him the farthest-footed god,
 Pleiad Mercury, never shewed
 To any poet's wisest sight
 In the silence of the night :—
 News of him the Assyrian priest †
 Found not in his sacred list,
 Though he traced back old king Nine,
 And Belus, elder name divine,
 And Osiris, endless famed.
 Not the glory, triple-named,
 Thrice great Hermes, though his eyes
 Read the shapes of all the skies,
 Left him in his sacred verse
 Reveal'd to Nature's worshippers.

O Plato ! and was this a dream
 Of thine in bowery Academe ?
 Wert thou the golden tongue to tell
 First of this high miracle,
 And charm him to thy schools below ?
 O call thy poets back, if so : ‡

* Tiresias, who was blind.

† Sanchoniathon.

‡ Whom Plato banished from his imaginary republic.

Back to the state thine exiles call,
 Thou greatest fabler of them all ;
 Or follow through the self-same gate,
 Thou, the founder of the state.

ODE TO THE GOLDEN AGE.

SUNG BY A CHORUS OF SHEPHERDS IN TASSO'S AMYNTAS.

It is to be borne in mind, that the opinions expressed in this famous ode of Tasso's, are only so expressed on the supposition of their compatibility with a state of innocence.

O LOVELY age of gold !
 Not that the rivers roll'd
 With milk, or that the woods wept honey-dew ;
 Not that the ready ground
 Produc'd without a wound,
 Or the mild serpent had no tooth that siew ;
 Not that a cloudless blue
 For ever was in sight,
 Or that the heaven which burns,
 And now is cold by turns,
 Look'd out in glad and everlasting light ;
 No, nor that even the insolent ships from far [war :
 Brought war to no new lands, nor riches worse than

But solely that that vain
 And breath-invented pain,
 That idol of mistake, that worshipped cheat,
 That Honour,—since so call'd
 By vulgar minds appall'd,
 Play'd not the tyrant with our nature yet.
 It had not come to fret

The sweet and happy fold
 Of gentle human-kind ;
 Nor did its hard law bind
 Souls nurs'd in freedom ; but that law of gold,
 That glad and golden law, all free, all fitted,
 Which Nature's own hand wrote—What pleases, is
 permitted.

Then among streams and flowers,
 The little winged Powers
 Went singing carols without toren or bow ;
 The nymphs and shepherds sat
 Mingling with innocent chat
 Sports and low whispers ; and with whispers low,
 Kisses that would not go.
 The maid, her childhood o'er,
 Kept not her bloom uneyed,
 Which now a veil must hide,
 Nor the crisp apples which her bosom bore ;
 And oftentimes, in river or in lake,
 The lover and his love their merry bath would take.

'Twas thou, thou, Honour, first
 That didst deny our thirst
 Its drink, and on the fount thy covering set ;
 Thou bad'st kind eyes withdraw
 Into constrained awe,
 And keep the secret for their tears to wet ;
 Thou gathered'st in a net
 The tresses from the air,
 And mad'st the sports and plays
 Turn all to sullen ways,
 And putt'st on speech a rein, in steps a care.
 Thy work it is,—thou shade that wilt not move,
 That what was once the gift, is now the theft of Love.

Our sorrows and our pains,
 These are thy noble gains.

But oh, thou Love's and Nature's masterer,
 Thou conqueror of the crown'd,
 What dost thou on this ground,
 Too small a circle for thy mighty sphere?
 Go, and make slumber dear
 To the renown'd and high;
 We here, a lowly race,
 Can live without thy grace,
 After the use of mild antiquity.
 Go, let us love; since years
 No truce allow, and life soon disappears;
 Go, let us love; the daylight dies, is born;
 But unto us the light
 Dies once for all, and sleep brings on eternal night.

PETRARCH'S CONTEMPLATIONS OF DEATH

IN THE BOWER OF LAURA.

CLEAR, fresh, and dulcet streams,
 Which the fair shape who seems
 To me sole woman, haunted at noon-tide;
 Fair bough, so gently fit,
 (I sigh to think of it)
 Which lent a pillar to her lovely side;
 And turf, and flowers bright-eyed,
 O'er which her folded gown
 Flow'd like an angel's down;
 And you, O holy air and hush'd,
 Where first my heart at her sweet glances gush'd;
 Give ear, give ear with one consenting,
 To my last words, my last, and my lamenting.

If 'tis my fate below,
 And heaven will have it so,

That love must close these dying eyes in tears,
 May my poor dust be laid
 In middle of your shade,
 While my soul naked mounts to its own spheres.
 The thought would calm my fears,
 When taking, out of breath,
 The doubtful step of death ;
 For never could my spirit find
 A stiller port after the stormy wind ;
 Nor in more calm, abstracted bourne, [outworn.
 Slip from my travaill'd flesh, and from my bones

Perhaps, some future hour,
 To her accustomed bower
 Might come the untamed, and yet the gentle she ;
 And where she saw me first,
 Might turn with eyes athirst
 And kinder joy to look again for me ;
 Then, Oh the charity !
 Seeing amidst the stones
 The earth that held my bones,
 A sigh for very love at last
 Might ask of heaven to pardon me the past :
 And heaven itself could not say nay,
 As with her gentle veil she wiped the tears away.

How well I call to mind,
 When from those boughs the wind
 Shook down upon her bosom flower on flower ;
 And there she sat, meek-eyed,
 In midst of all that pride,
 Sprinkled and blushing through an amorous shower.
 Some to her hair paid dower,
 And seem'd to dress the curls
 Queenlike, with gold and pearls ;
 Some, snowing, on her drapery stopp'd,
 Some on the earth, some on the water dropp'd ;
 While others, fluttering from above, [reigns Love."
 Seem'd wheeling round in pomp, and saying, "Here

How often then I said,
 Inward, and fill'd with dread,
 "Doubtless this creature came from paradise!"
 For at her look the while,
 Her voice, and her sweet smile,
 And heavenly air, truth parted from mine eyes;
 So that, with long-drawn sighs,
 I said, as far from men,
 "How came I here, and when!"
 I had forgotten; and alas!
 Fancied myself in heaven, not where I was;
 And from that time till this, I bear
 Such love for the green bower, I cannot rest elsewhere.

A DEPRECATION OF THE NAME OF JOHN.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF CASA.

WERE I some fifteen years younger or twenty,
 Master Gandolfo, I'd unbaptise myself,
 On purpose not to be called John. I never
 Can do a single thing in the way of business,
 Nor set out fast enough from my own door,
 But half-a-dozen people are calling after me;
 Though, when I turn, it isn't me; such crowds
 Are issuing forth, nam'd John, at the same moment.

'Tis downright insult; a mere public scandal.
 Clergymen,* lawyers, pedants,—not a soul,
 But his name's John. You shall not see a face,
 Looking like what it is, a simpleton's—
 Barber's, porkman's, or tooth-drawer's,—but the
 fellow
 Seems by his look to be a John,—and *is* one!

* Casa was himself in orders, and subsequently a bishop.

I verily think, that the first man who cried
 Boil'd apples or maccaroni, was a John ;
 And so was he who found out roasted chesnuts,
 And how to eat cucumbers, and new cheese.
 By heavens ! I 'd rather be a German ; nay,
 I 'd almost said a Frenchman ; nay, a Jew,
 And be called Matthew, or Bartholomew,
 Or some such beast,—or Simon. Really people
 Who christen people, ought to pause a little,
 And think what they 're about.—O you who love
 me,
 Don't call me John, for God's sake ; or at least,
 If you must call me so, call it me softly ;
 For as to mentioning the name out loud,
 You might as well call after one like a dog,—
 Whistle, and snap your fingers, and cry, " Here, boy."

Think of the name of John upon a title-page !
 It damns the book at once ; and reasonably :
 People no sooner see it, than they conclude
 They 've read the work before.—Oh I must say
 My father made a pretty business of it,
 Calling *me* John ! *me*, 'faith—his eldest son !
 Heir to his—poverty ! Why there 's not a writ,
 But nine times out of ten, is serv'd on John,
 And what still more annoys me, not a bill :
 Your promiser to pay is always John.

Some people fondly make the word a compound,
 And get some other name to stand its friend,
 Christening the hapless devil John-Antony,
 John-Peter, or John-Baptist, or John-Charles ;
 There's even John-Barnard, and John-Martin !—Oh,
 See if the other name likes his society !

It never does, humour it as you will.
 Change it, diminish it, call it Johnny, or Jacky,
 Or Jack, 'tis always a sore point,—a wound ;—
 Shocking, if left alone,—and worse, if touch'd.

PASSAGES FROM REDI'S DITHYRAMBIC POEM OF

BACCHUS IN TUSCANY.

The Author has translated the whole of this popular piece of Italian pleasantry, which is a criticism on the wines of the poet's country ; but even in the original it is perhaps too long, especially as a monologue ; for Bacchus talks it all from beginning to end ; and the local nature of the subjects and the allusions renders it, for the most part, of little interest to a foreign reader. He has persuaded himself, however, that a few passages will bring their recommendation with them, in the gaiety of their animal spirits. The reader will be good enough to bear in mind, that strange compound epithets and other audacities of style are among the privileges of Dithyrambic poetry.

BACCHUS'S OPINION OF WINE, CHOCOLATE, TEA, BEER,
AND OTHER INCOMPATIBLE BEVERAGES.

GIVE me, give me Buriano,
Trebiano, Colombano,
Give me bumpers, rich and clear !
'Tis the true old Aurum Potabile
Gilding life when it wears shabbily :
Helen's old Nepenthe 'tis,
That in the drinking
Swallowed thinking,
And was the receipt for bliss.
Thence it is, that ever and aye,
When he doth philosophise,
Good old glorious Rucellai
Hath it for light unto his eyes ,
He lifteth it, and by the shine
Well discerneth things divine ;

Atoms with their airy justles,
 And all manner of corpuscles ;
 And, as through a crystal sky-light,
 How morning differeth from evening twilight ;
 And further telleth us the reason why go
 Some stars with such a lazy light, and some with
 [a vertigo.

Oh how widely wandereth he,
 Who in search of verity
 Keeps aloof from glorious wine !
 Lo the knowledge it bringeth to me !
 For Barbarossa, this wine so bright,
 With its rich red look and its strawberry light,
 So inviteth me,
 So delighteth me,
 I should infallibly quench my inside with it,
 Had not Hippocrates,
 And old Andromachus,
 Strictly forbidden it,
 And loudly chidden it,
 So many stomachs have sicken'd and died with it.
 Yet discordant as it is,
 Two good biggins will not come amiss ;
 Because I know, while I 'm drinking them down,
 What is the finish and what is the crown.
 A cup of good Corsican
 Does it at once ;
 Or a glass of old Spanish
 Is neat for the nonce :
 Quackish resources are things for a dunce.
 Talk of Chocolate !
 Talk of Tea !
 Medicines made, ye gods ! as they are,
 Are no medicines made for me.
 I would sooner take to poison
 Than a single cup set eyes on
 Of that bitter and guilty stuff ye
 Talk of by the name of Coffee.

Let the Arabs and the Turks
 Count it 'mongst their cruel works :
 Foe of mankind, black and turbid,
 Let the throats of slaves absorb it.
 Down in Tartarus,
 Down in Erebus,
 'Twas the detestable Fifty invented it.
 The Furies then took it
 To grind and to cook it,
 And to Proserpina all three presented it.
 If the Mussulman in Asia
 Doats on a beverage so unseemly,
 I differ with the man extremely.

* * * * *

There's a squalid thing, called beer :--
 The man whose lips that thing comes near
 Swiftly dies ; or falling foolish,
 Grows, at forty, old and owlsh.
 She that in the ground would hide her,
 Let her take to English cyder :
 He who'd have his death come quicker,
 Any other northern liquor.
 Those Norwegians and those Laps
 Have extraordinary taps :
 Those Laps especially have strange fancie ;
 To see them drink,
 I verily think
 Would make me lose my senses.
 But a truce to such vile subjects,
 With their impious, shocking objects.
 Let me purify my mouth
 In a holy cup o' the south ;
 In a golden pitcher let me
 Head and ears for comfort get me,
 And drink of the wine of the vine benign
 That sparkles warm in Sansovine.

ICE NECESSARY TO WINE.

You know Lamporecchio, the castle renown'd
 For the gardener so dumb, whose works did abound ;
 There 's a topaz they make there ; pray let it go round.
 Serve, serve me a dozen,
 But let it be frozen ;
 Let it be frozen and finished with ice,
 And see that the ice be as virginly nice,
 As the coldest that whistles from wintery skies.
 Coolers and cellarets, crystal with snows,
 Should always hold bottles in ready repose.
 Snow is good liquor's fifth element ;
 No compound without it can give content :
 For weak is the brain, and I hereby scout it,
 That thinks in hot weather to drink without it.
 Bring me heaps from the Shady Valley* :
 Bring me heaps
 Of all that sleeps
 On every village hill and alley.
 Hold there, you satyrs,
 Your beard-shaking chatters,
 And bring me ice duly, and bring it me doubly,
 Out of the grotto of Monte di Boboli.
 With axes and pickaxes,
 Hammers and rammers,
 Thump it and hit it me,
 Crack it and crash it me,
 Hew it and split it me,
 Pound it and smash it me,
 Till the whole mass (for I'm dead-dry, I think)
 Turns to a cold, fit to freshen my drink.
 If with hot wine we insack us,
 Say our name's not Bacchus.

* Vallombrosa,—which an Englishman may call *Milton's* Vallombrosa. The convent there was visited by Ariosto, who celebrates the monks for their hospitality.

If we taste the weight of a button,
 Say we're a glutton.
 He who, when he first wrote verses,
 Had the Graces by his side,
 Then at rhymers' evil courses
 Shook his thunders far and wide,
 (For his great heart rose and burn'd,
 Till his words to thunder turn'd)
 He, I say, Menzini,* he,
 The marvellous and the masterly,
 Whom the leaves of Phœbus crown,
 Alterable Anacreon,—
 He shall give me, if I do it,
 Gall of the satiric poet,
 Gall from out his blackest well,
 Shuddering, unescapeable.
 But if still, as I ought to do,
 I love my wine iced through and through,
 If I will have it (and none beside)
 Superultrafrostified,
 He that reigns in Pindus then,
 Visible Phœbus among men,
 Filicaia, shalt exalt
 Me above the starry vault ;
 While the other swans divine,
 Who swim with their proud hearts in wine,
 And make their laurel groves resound
 With the names of the laurel-crown'd,
 All shall sing, till our goblets ring,
 Long live Bacchus our glorious King !
 Evoè ! let them roar away !
 Evoè !
 Evoè !
 Evoè ! let the lords of wit
 Rise and echo, where they sit,

* The poets, whose names here follow, were contemporaries and friends of Redi. Filicaia is well known to the lovers of Italian literature, as a fine writer of sonnets and odes.

Where they sit enthroned each,
 Arbiters of sovereign speech,
 Under the great Tuscan dame,
 Who sifts the flour and gives it fame.*
 Let the shout by Segni be
 Register'd immortally,
 And dispatch'd by a *courier*
A monsieur l'Abbé Regnier.†

BACCHUS GROWS MUSICAL IN HIS CUPS.

THE ruby dew that stills
 Upon Valdarno's hills,
 Touches the sense with odour so divine,
 That not the violet,
 With lips with morning wet,
 Utters such sweetness from her little shrine.
 When I drink of it, I rise
 Far o'er the hill that makes poets wise,
 And in my voice and in my song,
 Grow so sweet and grow so strong,
 I challenge Phœbus with his Delphic eyes.
 Give me then, from a golden measure,
 The ruby that is my treasure, my treasure ;
 And like to the lark that goes maddening above,
 I'll sing songs of love !
 Songs will I sing more moving and fine,
 Than the bubbling and quaffing of Gersole wine.
 Then the rote shall go round,
 And the cymbals kiss,
 And I'll praise Ariadne,
 My beauty, my bliss ;

* The Della Cruscan academy, professed *sifters* of words. Hence their name, from the word Crusca (bran), and their device of flour and a mill.

† Regnier Desmarais, Secretary of the French Academy, himself a writer of Italian verses.

I'll sing of her tresses,
 I'll sing of her kisses ;
 Now, now it increases,
 The fervour increases,
 The fervour, the boiling, and venomous bliss.
 The grim god of war and the arrowy boy
 Double-gallant me with desperate joy :
 Love, love, and a fight !
 I must make me a knight ;
 I must make me thy knight of the bath, fair friend,
 A knight of the bathing that knows no end.

GOOD WINE A GENTLEMAN.

OH boys, this Tuscan land divine
 Hath such a natural talent for wine,
 We'll fall, we'll fall
 On the barrels and all ;
 We'll fall on the must, we'll fall on the presses,
 We'll make the boards groan with our grievous
 caresses ;
 No measure, I say ; no order, but riot ;
 No waiting, nor cheating ; we'll drink like a Sciot :
 Drink, drink, and drink when you've done ;
 Pledge it, and frisk it, every one ;
 Chirp it and challenge it, swallow it down ;
 He that's afraid, is a thief and a clown.
 Good wine's a gentleman ;
 He speedeth digestion all he can :
 No headache hath he, no headache, I say,
 For those who talked with him yesterday.
 If Signor Bellini, besides his apes,
 Would anatomise vines, and anatomise grapes,
 He'd see that the heart that makes good wine
 Is made to do good, and very benign.

THE PRAISE OF CHIANTI WINE, AND DENOUNCEMENT
OF WATER.

TRUE son of the earth is Chianti wine,
Born on the ground of a gypsy vine ;
Born on the ground for sturdy souls,
And not the lank race of one of your poles.
I should like to see a snake
Get up in August out of a brake,
And fasten with all his teeth and caustic
Upon that sordid villain of a rustic,
Who, to load my Chianti's haunches
With a parcel of feeble bunches,
Went and tied her to one of these poles,—
Sapless sticks without any souls !

Like a king
In his conquering,
Chianti wine with his red flag goes
Down to my heart, and down to my toes :
He makes no noise, he beats no drums ;
Yet pain and trouble fly as he comes.
And yet a good bottle of Carmignan,
He of the two is the merrier man ;
He brings from heav'n such a rain of joy,
I envy not Jove his cups, old boy.
Drink, Ariadne ; the grapery
Was the warmest and brownest in Tuscany :
Drink, and whatever they have to say,
Still to the Naiads answer nay ;
For mighty folly it were, and a sin,
When you drink Carmignan to put water in.

He who drinks water,
I wish to observe,
Gets nothing from me ;
He may eat it and starve.

Whether it's well, or whether it's fountain,
Or whether it comes foaming white from the
mountain,

I cannot admire it,

Nor ever desire it ;

'Tis a fool and a madman, and impudent wretch,

Who now will live in a nasty ditch,

And then, grown proud and full of his whims,

Comes playing the devil and cursing his brims,

And swells and tumbles, and bothers his margins,

And ruins the flowers, although they be *vargins*.

Moles and piers, were it not for him,

Would last for ever,

If they're built clever ;

But no—it's all one with him—sink or swim.

Let the people yclept Mameluke

Praise the Nile without any rebuke ;

Let the Spaniards praise the Tagus ;

I cannot like either, even for negus.

Away with all water,

Wherever I come ;

I forbid it ye, gentlemen,

All and some ;

Lemonade water,

Jessamine water,

Our tavern knows none of 'em,

Water's a *hum*.

Jessamine makes a pretty crown ;

But as a drink 'twill never go down.

All your hydromels and flips

Come not near these prudent lips.

All your sippings and sherbets,

And a thousand such pretty sweets,

Let your mincing ladies take 'em,

And fops whose little fingers ache 'em.

Wine ! Wine ! is your only drink ;

Grief never dares to look at the brink :

Six times a year to be mad with wine,
I hold it no shame, but a very good sign.

A TUNE ON THE WATER.

OH what a thing
'Tis for you and for me,
On an evening in spring,
To sail in the sea !
The little fresh airs
Spread their silver wings,
And o'er the blue pavement
Dance love-makings.
To the tune of the waters, and tremulous glee,
They strike up a dance to people at sea.

MONTEPULCIANO ENTHRONED.

A SMALL glass, and thirsty ! Be sure never ask it ;
Man might as well serve up soup in a basket.
This my broad, and this my high
Bacchanalian butlery
Lodgeth not, nor doth admit
Glasses made with little wit ;
Little bits of would-be bottles
Run to seed in strangled throttles.
Such things are for invalids,
Sipping dogs that keep their beds.
As for shallow cups like plates,
Break them upon shallower pates.
Such glassicles,
And vesicles,
And bits of things like icicles,
Are toys and curiosities
For babies and their gaping eyes ;

Things for dames to put in caskets,
 Or beside 'em in work-baskets ;
 I don't mean those who keep their coaches, }
 But those who make grand foot-approaches, }
 With flower'd gowns, and fine huge *broaches*. }
 'Tis in a magnum's world alone
 The Graces have room to sport and be known.
 Fill, fill, let us all have our will :
 But with *what*, with *what*, boys, shall we fill ?
 Sweet Ariadne—no, not *that* one,—*ah* no ;
 Fill me the manna of Montepulciano :
 Fill me a magnum, and reach it me.—Gods !
 How it slides to my heart by the sweetest of roads !
 Oh, how it kisses me, tickles me, bites me !
 Oh, how my eyes loosen sweetly in tears !
 I'm ravish'd ! I'm rapt ! Heaven finds me admis-
 Lost in an ecstasy ! blinded ! invisible ! [sible !

Hearken all earth !
 We, Bacchus, in the might of our great mirth,
 To all who reverence us, and are right thinkers ;—
 Hear, all ye drinkers !
 Give ear and give faith to our edict divine—
 MONTEPULCIANO 'S THE KING OF ALL WINE.

At these glad sounds,
 The Nymphs, in giddy rounds,
 Tossing their ivy diadems and grapes,
 Echoed the triumph in a thousand shapes.
 The Satyrs would have join'd them ; but alas !
 They couldn't ; for they lay about the grass,
 As drunk as apes.

THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS.

FROM THE LUTRIN OF BOILEAU.

THE subject of the *Lutrin* is a dispute between the Chanter and Treasurer (or Dean) of a Cathedral Chapel in Paris, respecting the right of having a reading-desk in the Choir, and of giving the benediction. If the Chanter can succeed in publicly giving the benediction to the Dean himself, he thinks he shall establish that privilege without further trouble: on the other hand, if the Dean can get the start of him and bless the Chanter, his predominance is secured for ever.

Luckily for the Dean, whenever he and the Chanter are together, and a multitude assembled, he enjoys, from prescription, the greater influence; and how he gains his end accordingly, is set forth in the ensuing *Battle of the Books*, which is the original of Swift's prose satire. Boileau is quite at home in it. It gives him an opportunity, as Warton observes, of indulging in his favourite pastime of ridiculing bad authors. This perhaps is the liveliest and most inventive passage in all the *Lutrin*; and it may be fairly pitted against the *Battle of the Beaux and Ladies* in the *Rape of the Lock*, being at once more satirical, probable, and full of life. If Pope's mock-heroic excels in delicacy and fancy, (which I cannot but think it does, out and out,) Boileau's may lay claim to a jollier and robuster spirit of ridicule, and to a greater portion of *movement*.

MEANWHILE the canons, far from all this noise,
 With rapid mouthfuls urge the hungry joys:
 With flowing cups and irritating salt,
 Their thirst by turns they lay and they exalt;
 Fervent they feed, with palate and with eye;
 Through all its caverns gapes a monstrous ven'son pie.
 To these Fame comes, and hastens to relate
 The law consulted and the threaten'd fate:
 Up starts the chief, and cries "Consult we too!"
 With bile and claret strove his sudden hue.

Groans Everard from the board untimely torn,
But far away among the rest is borne.

A short and secret passage knew the band ;
Through this they ruffle, and soon reach the stand,
Where Barbin, bookseller of equal eye,
Sells good and bad to all who choose to buy.
Proud up the platform mount the valiant train
Making loud way, when lo ! so fates ordain,
As proud and loud and close at hand are seen
The fervid squadron, headed by the Dean.
The chiefs approaching, shew a turbid grace ;
They measure with their eyes, they fume, they }
face ; }
And had they hoofs, had paw'd upon the place. }

Thus two proud bulls, whom equal flames surprise
For some fair heifer with her Juno's eyes,
Forget their pasture, meet with horrid bows,
And stooping, threaten with their stormy brows.

But the sad Everard, elbow'd as he pass'd,
No longer could endure his demi-fast.
Plung'd in the shop, he seizes on a book,
A "Cyrus"* (lucky in the first he took,)
And aiming at the man (Boirude was he)
Launch'd at his head the chaste enormity.
Boirude evaded, graz'd in cheek alone,
But Sidrac's stomach felt it with a groan.
Punch'd by the dire "Artamenes," he fell
At the Dean's feet, and lay incapable.
His troop believe him dead, and with a start
Feel their own stomachs for the wounded part.

* "Artamenes, or the Grand Cyrus," written by Mademoiselle Scuderi. The books mentioned in this battle are either obsolete French romances, or sorry productions of the author's contemporaries.

But rage and fear alike now rouse their gall,
 And twenty champions on the murd'rer fall.
 The canons to support the shock, advance :
 On every side ferments the direful dance ;
 Then Discord gives a roar, loud as when meet
 Two herds of rival graziers in a street.
 The bookseller was out, the troops rush in,
 Fast fly his quartos ; his octavos spin.
 On Everard most they fall as thick as hail,
 As when in spring the stony showers prevail,
 And beat the blossoms till the season fail. }
 All arm them as they can : one gives a scotch
 With "Love's Decree ;" another, with the "Watch :"
 This a French Tasso flings, a harmless wound,
 And that the only "Jonas" ever bound.
 The boy of Barbin vainly interferes,
 And thrusts amidst the fray his generous ears :
 Within, without, the books fly o'er and o'er, }
 Seek the dipp'd heads, and thump the dusty floor, }
 And strew the wondering platform at the door. }
 Here, with Guarini, Terence lies : and there
 Jostles with Xenophon the fop La Serre.
 Oh what unheard-of books, what great unknowns,
 Quitted that day their dusty garrisons !
 You, "Almerinde and Simander," mighty twins,
 Were there, tremendous in your ancient skins :
 And you, most hidden "Caloander," saw
 The light for once, drawn forth by Gaillerbois.
 Doubtful of blood, each handles his brain-pan :
 On every chair there lies a clergyman.
 A critical "Le Vayer" hits Giraut
 Just where a reader yawns, and lays him low.
 Marin, who thought himself translator-proof,
 On his right shoulder feels a dire Brebeuf ;
 The weary pang pervades his arm ; he frowns,
 And damns the Lucan dear to country towns.
 Poor Dodillon, with senses render'd thick
 By a "Pinchêne" in quarto, rises sick ;

Then walks away. Him scorn'd in vain Garagne,
 Smitten in forehead by a Charlemagne:
 O wonderful effect of sacred verse!
 The warrior slumbers where he meant to curse.
 Great glory with a "Clelia," Bloc obtain'd;
 Ten times he threw it, and ten times regain'd.

But nought, Fabri, withstood thy bulky Mars,
 Thou canon, nurs'd in all the church's wars.
 Big was Fabri, big bon'd, a large divine;
 No water knew his elemental wine.
 By him both Gronde and Grinde were overthrown,
 And tenor Grosse, and Gruffe the bary-tone,
 And Gingol, bad except in easy parts,
 And Gigue, whose alto touched the ladies' hearts.

At last the Singers, turning one and all,
 Fly to regain the loop-holes of the Hall:
 So fly from a grey wolf, with sudden sweep,
 The bleating terrors of a flock of sheep;
 Or thus, o'erborne by the Pelidean powers,
 The Trojans turning sought their windy towers,
 Brontin beheld, and thus address'd Boirude:
 "Illustrious carrier of the sacred wood,
 Thou, who one step did'st never yet give way,
 Huge as the burthen was, and hot the day;
 Say shall we look on this inglorious scene,
 And bear a Canon conquering a Dean?
 And shall our children's children have it said,
 We stain'd the glory of the rochet's red?
 Ah, no; disabled though I thus recline,
 A carcass still, and a Quinaut, are mine;
 Accept the covert of my bulk, and aim;
 A blow may crown thee with a David's fame."
 He said,—and tended him the gentle book;
 With ardour in his eyes the Sexton took,
 Then lurk'd, then aim'd, and right between the eyes,
 Hit the great athlete, to his dumb surprise.

O feeble stroke! O bullet, not of lead!
 The book, like butter, dumps against his head.
 With scorn the Canon chafed: "Now mark," said he,
 "Ye secret couple, base and cowardly,
 See if this arm consents against the foe
 To launch a book, that softens in the blow."

He said, and on an old Infortiat seiz'd,
 In distant ages much by lawyers greas'd,
 A huge black-letter mass, whose mighty hoards
 More mighty look'd bound in two ponderous boards.
 Half sides of old black parchment wooed the grasp,
 And from three nails there hung the remnant of a
 To heave it on its shelf, among the I's, [clasp.
 Would take three students of the common size.
 The Canon, nathless, rais'd it to his head,
 And on the pair, now crouching and half dead,
 Sent with both hands the wooden thunder down:
 Groan the two warriors, clashing in the crown,
 And murder'd and undone with oak and nails,
 Forth from the platform roll, and seek the guttery
 [vales.

The Dean, astonish'd at a fall so dire,
 Utters a cry as when the punch'd expire.
 He curses in his heart all devilish broils,
 And making awful room, six steps recoils.
 Not long:—for now all eyes encountering his
 To see how Deans endure calamities,
 Like a great chief he makes no further stand,
 But drawing from his cloak his good right hand,
 And stretching meek the sacred fingers twain,
 Goes blessing all around him, might and main.
 He knows full well, not only that the foe
 Once smitten thus, can neither stand nor go,
 But that the public sense of their defeat
 Must leave him lord, in church as well as street.
 The crowd already on his side he sees;
 The cry is fierce, "Profane ones, on your knees:"

The Chanter, who beheld the stroke from far,
 In vain seeks courage for a sacred war :
 His heart abandons him : he yields, he flies ;
 His soldiers follow with bewilder'd eyes :
 All fly, all fear, but none escape the pain ;
 The conq'ring fingers follow and detain.
 Everard alone, upon a book employ'd,
 Had hoped the sacred insult to avoid ;
 But the wise chief, keeping a side-long eye,
 And feigning to the right to pass him by,
 Suddenly turn'd, and facing him in van,
 Beyond redemption bless'd th' unhappy man.
 The man, confounded with the mortal stroke,
 From his long vision of rebellion woke,
 Fell on his knees in penitential wise,
 And gave decorum what he owed the skies.

Home trod the Dean victorious, and ordain'd
 The resurrection of the Desk regain'd :
 While the vain Chapter, with its fallen crest,
 Slunk to its several musings, *lost* and *bless'd*.

LOVE AND AGE.

FROM MADAME D'HOUDETÔT.

—•—

WHEN young, I lov'd. At that enchanting age,
 So sweet, so short, love was my sole delight ;
 And when I reach'd the time for being sage,
 Still I lov'd on, for reason gave me right.

Snows come at length, and livelier joys depart,
 Yet gentle ones still kiss these eyelids dim ;
 For still I love, and love consoles my heart ;
 What could console me for the loss of Him ?

EPITAPH ON AN ENGLISHMAN.

FROM DESTOUCHES.

—♦—
 HERE lies Sir John Plumpudding, of the Grange,
 Who hung himself one morning, for a change.

LOVE AND REASON.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A PHILOSOPHER AND HIS MISTRESS

FROM THE CHEVALIER DE BOUFFLERS.

—♦—
Phil. Think of reason,
 Love's a poison
 Tender hearts should fear to touch.

Mist. From this poison
 There's no reason,
 I conceive, to fear so much.

Phil. Dreadful poison !
 Beauteous reason !

Mist. Horrid reason !
 Charming poison !

Phil. Farewell, poison ;
 'Tis to reason
 I direct my placid view :

Mist. Nonsense, reason !
 'Tis the poison,
 Sir, I must expect of you.

LOVE AND WAR.

FROM THE SAME.

IF war were an evil not to be done away, it would be right to construe its necessity as handsomely as possible ; and, among others, the argument implied in this jeu d'esprit would not be one of the least satisfactory. Had Uncle Toby married the Widow Wadman, and left us a son, the young gentleman might have sung the song, going to the wars, to the dance of the band of music and his own feather.

LET us make love, let us make war,
 This is your motto, boys, these are your courses ;
 War may appear to cost people too dear,
 But love re-imburses, but love re-imburses.

The foe and the fair, let 'em see what we are,
 For the good of the nation, the good of the nation ;
 What possible debtor can pay his debts better,
 Than *De*-population with *Re*-population ?

ABEL AND MABEL; OR, WISE AND WISER.

FROM THE FRENCH OF TABOUROT.

ABEL fain would marry Mabel ;
 Well, it's very wise of Abel.
 But Mabel won't at all have Abel ;
 Well, it's wiser still of Mabel.

ON THE LAUGH OF MADAME D'ALBRET.

FROM CLEMENT MAROT.

YES, that fair neck, too beautiful by half,
 Those eyes, that voice, that bloom, all do her
 Yet after all, that little giddy laugh [honour :
 Is what, in my mind, sits the best upon her.

Good God ! 'twould make the very streets and ways
 Through which she passes, burst into a pleasure !
 Did melancholy come to mar my days,
 And kill me in the lap of too much leisure,
 No spell were wanting, from the dead to raise me,
 But only that sweet laugh, wherewith she slays me.

A LOVE-LESSON.

FROM THE SAME.

A SWEET "No, no"—with a sweet smile beneath,
 Becomes an honest girl : I'd have you learn it :—
 As for plain "Yes," it may be said, 'ifaith,
 Too plainly and too oft :—pray, well discern it.

Not that I'd have my pleasure incomplete,
 Or lose the kiss for which my lips beset you ;
 But that in suffering me to take it, sweet,
 I'd have you say, "No, no, I will not let you."

THE CURATE AND HIS BISHOP.

FROM THE FRENCH. WRITTEN DURING THE OLD REGIME.
AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

ON business call'd from his abode,
A Curate jogg'd along the road.
In patient leanness jogg'd his mare ;
The Curate, jogging, breath'd a prayer ;
And jogging as she fac'd the meads,
His maid, behind him, told her beads.

They hear a carriage ; it o'ertakes 'em ;
With grinding noise and dust it rakes 'em ;
'Tis he himself ! they know his port ;
My Lord the Bishop, bound to court.
Beside him, to help meditation,
The lady sits, his young relation.

The carriage stops ! the Curate doffs
His hat, and bows ; the lady coughs :
The Prelate bends his lordly eyes,
And " How now, sir ! " in wrath he cries ;
" What ! choose the very King's highway,
And ride with girls in open day !
Good heav'ns ! what next will curates do ?
My fancy shudders at the view.—
Girl, cover up your horrid stocking ;
Was ever seen a group so shocking ! "

" My Lord, " replies the blushing man,
" Pardon me, pray, and pardon Anne ;
Oh deem it, good my Lord, no sin :
I had no coach to put her in. "

LEGEND OF FLORENCE.

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

One step to the death-bed,
 And one to the bier,
 And one to the charnel,
 And one—oh where?—SHELLEY.

TO ARMORER DONKIN, Esq., of Newcastle, without the aid of whose practical wisdom, in combination with his kind heart, the author might never have had health or leisure enough to indulge himself in an effort of this kind, the following PLAY is inscribed by his obliged and affectionate servant,

CHELSEA, *Feb. 6, 1840.*

LEIGH HUNT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| FRANCESCO AGOLANTI, a noble Florentine | <i>Mr. Moore.</i> |
| ANTONIO RONDINELLI, another | <i>Mr. Anderson.</i> |
| FULVIO DA RIVA, a Poet | <i>Mr. Bartley.</i> |
| CESARE COLONNA, an Officer of the Pope's Guards | } <i>Mr. G. Vandenhoff.</i> |
| GIULIO, a Page | |
| SERVANT | <i>Mr. Payne.</i> |
| GINEVRA, Wife to Agolanti | <i>Miss Ellen Tree.</i> |
| OLIMPIA, friend of Ginevra | <i>Miss Charles.</i> |
| DIANA, another | <i>Mrs. Brougham.</i> |
| FIORDILISA, Ginevra's handmaiden | <i>Miss Lee.</i> |

SCENE—*Florence and its Neighbourhood.*

TIME—*During the Pontificate of Leo the Tenth.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The High-road from Florence to Rome.*

Enter DA RIVA and COLONNA, meeting.

Col. Fulvio, immortal boy—poet—good fellow—
Punctual moreover, which is wonder's climax,—
How dost? and where hast been these eighteen
At grass, eh? fattening with thy Pegasus, [months?
Like the most holy father!

Riva. Dearest Cesare,
'Tis you, methinks, are the immortal boy,
Growing nor fat nor thin, but still the same;
Still the same bantering, glittering, blithe, good soul,
Pretending to give blows, to excuse thy blessings.

Col. Nay, but the poet is the youth for ever,
Howe'er he grow; let him feign even a bit
Of a white top, like our old roaring boys,
Ætna and Vesuvius, with their sides of wine.
You know, Da Riva, for those hairs of thine
I ought to call thee father, if I could;
But then thine heart, and this warm hand to match,
Will never let me think thee, somehow or other,
A dozen years older than myself.

Riva. Years older!
A pretty jest, 'faith, when our souls were twins,
And thou but the more light one like an almond
Pack'd in one shell behind a plumper. Well,
How dost? and how does Florio and Filippo?
And is the Pope really and truly come
At last, and in his own most sacred person,
To see and glorify his native place?
Or hast thou shot before him, like a ray
Out of his orb?

Col. Thy simile has it, 'faith :
Here is his ray, shining upon thyself,
As his ray should ; and the good orb meanwhile,
Growing a little stout or so, reposes
Some nine miles off, and will be here next week,
Just by the time your speeches are all ready.

Riva. And toilets ?

Col. Ay, and your extempore odes.
Well, well ; you see we are insolent as ever,
All well and merry.—Not so, eh ? in Florence ?
How is Antonio ? and pray, who was he,
That fellow yonder—there he goes—that left you
Just as I came, and went off bowing so,
With such a lavish courtesy and close eye ?

Riva. That lavish courtesy and that close eye
Will tell you how Antonio is. That fellow,
As you call him, is one of the most respectable men
In Florence. "Men," do I say ? one of the richest
And proudest nobles ; of strict fame withal,
Yet courteous ; bows to every one, pays every

Col. Oh villain ! [one—

Riva. Flatters every one ; in short,
Is as celestial out of his own house,
As he is devil within it. (*Whispering in his ear*)
Ginevra's husband.

Col. The devil it is ! (*Looking after him*) Me-
thinks he casts a blackness
Around him as he walks, and blights the vineyards.
And all is true then, is it, which they tell me ?
What, quite ? Has he no plea ? no provocation
From lover, or from wife ?

Riva. None that I know of,
Except her patience and the lover's merit.
Antonio's love, you know, is old as his,
Has been more tried, and, I believe, is spotless.

Col. Dear Rondinelli !—Well, but has this hus-
band
No taste of good in him at all ? no corner

In his heart, for some small household grace to sneak in?

Riva. Nay, what he has of grace in him is not in all, except a heart, and a black shade [sneaking. Of superstition, he is man enough : Has a bold blood, large brain, and liberal hand, As far as the purse goes ; albeit he likes The going to be blown abroad with trumpets. Nay, I won't swear he does not love his wife, As well as a man of no sort of affection, Nor any domestic tenderness, can do so.

Col. A mighty attaching gentleman, i'faith, And quite uxorious.

Riva. Why, thus it is. He highly approves her virtues, talents, beauty ; Thinks her the sweetest woman in all Florence, Partly, because she is,—partly, because She is his own, and glorifies his choice ; And therefore he does her the honour of making The representative and epitome [her Of all he values,—public reputation, Private obedience, delighted fondness, Grateful return for his unamiableness, Love without bounds, in short, for his self-love :— And as she finds it difficult, poor soul, To pay such reasonable demands at sight With the whole treasure of her heart and smiles, The gentleman takes pity on—himself ! Looks on himself as the most unresponded to And unaccountably ill-used bad temper In Tuscany ; rages at every word And look she gives another ; and fills the house With miseries, which, because they ease himself And his vile spleen, he thinks her bound to suffer ; And then finds malice in her very suffering !

Col. And she, they tell me, suffers dangerously ?

Riva. 'Tis thought she'll die of it. And yet, observe now :

Such is poor human nature, at least such
 Is poor inhuman nature in this man,
 That if she were to die, I verily think
 He 'd weep, and sit at the receipt of pity,
 And call upon the gods, and think he loved her !

Col. Poor, dear, damn'd tyrant!—and where goes
 he now ?

Riva. To Florence, from his country-house ; be-
 twixt

Which place and town, what with his jealousy
 Of the sweet soul, and love of mighty men,
 He 'll lead a devil of a life this fortnight ;
 Not knowing whether to let her share the holiday
 For fear of them, and of Antonio ;
 Or whether, for worse fear, still of Antonio,
 To keep her in the shades, love's natural haunt.

Col. The town 's the hiding-place. Be sure he 'll
 Some musty lodging in the thick of the town, [take
 To hide her in : perhaps within the sound [sures
 Of the shows to vex her ; and let her see what plea-
 She loses in not loving him.—Well, here am I,
 A feather in the cap of the fair advent
 Of his most pleasant Holiness Pope Leo,
 Come to make holiday with my Tuscan friends,
 And lay our loving heads together, to see
 What can be done to help this gentle lady
 For poor Antonio's sake, and for her own.

Riva. Ay, and amidst those loving heads are
 lovely ones.

What think you of the bright Olimpia,
 And sweet Diana, her more thoughtful friend ?—
 You recollect them ?

Col. What ! the divine widows,
 That led that bevy of young married dames
 At the baths of Pisa, and whom we used to call
 Sunlight and Moonlight ?

Riva. The identical stars.
 She of the crescent has a country-house,

Here in the neighbourhood, close by Agolanti's.
 There are they both ; and there Antonio is
 Waiting us two ; and thence his friends the ladies,
 Escorted by us two, will go to visit
 Their friend Ginevra ; partly, if they can,
 To bring him better news of his saint's health,
 Partly for other reasons which you'll see:

Col. Charming ! And wherefore stand you look-
 This way and that ? [ing then,

Riva. Why, *this* way is our road ;
 And that way I was looking to see how far
 Our friend, the foe, was on his way to town.
 I have never, you must know, been in his house ;
 And little thought he, when he saw us here,
 What unexpected introduction, eh ?
 Was waiting us. I can't help thinking, somehow,
 He'll hear of it, and come back.

Col. For Heaven's sake, haste then. [most !
 What ! loitering !—May the *husband* take the hind-

SCENE II.—*A Room in the Villa Agolanti.*

Enter GIULIO and FIORDILISA, meeting.

Fior. Alas ! my lady is very angry, Giulio !

Giu. Angry ! At what ?

Fior. At Signor Antonio's letter.
 Oh, she says dreadful things. She says you and I
 Will kill her ; that we make her, or would make her,
 Tell falsehoods to her husband, or bring down
 His justice on our heads ; and she forbids me,
 However innocent you may call, or think it,
 Bring letters any more. She bade me give it you
 Back again—see—unopen'd.

Giu. 'Tis a pity

That, too.

Fior. Why, Giulio ?

Giu. Oh, Signor Antonio

Read it me ;—ay, he did—he 's such a gentleman. He said,—“See, Giulio, I would not have you wrong Your mistress in a thought ; nor give you an office Might do yourself the thought of wrong or harm.” You know I told you what he wrote outside— You recollect it—there it is—“most harmless,— I dare to add, most virtuous ;” and there 's more Besides here, underneath. Did she read that ?

Fior. I know not. She read very quickly, at any rate ;

Then held it off, as though it frighten'd her, And gave it back. And she look'd angry too ; At least, she did not look as she is used, But turn'd right so, and waived me to be gone.— I cannot bear to do the thing she likes not.

Giu. Nor I.

Fior. Well—so I think. But hush !

a step !

[*Runs to the window.*

And coming quickly ! 'tis the Signor—'Tis !

So soon come back too !—Strike up the guitar—

Strike up that song of Hope my lady loves—

Quickly now—there 's a good little Giulio. [*Exit.*

Giu. Little ! well, come, for such an immense young gentlewoman

That 's pretty well ! she has fallen in love I fear With some tall elderly person.—But the song.

Giu. [*Sings.*]

Hope, thou pretty child of heaven ; I prythee, Hope, abide—

I will not ask too much of thee—by my suffering side.

Grief is good for humbleness, and earth is fair to see ;

And if I do my duty, Hope, I think thou'lt stay with me.

Enter AGOLANTI.

Ago. What frivolous ante-chamber tinkling now Attunes the pulse to levity ? puts folly

In mind of vice, as tho' the hint were needed ?

[*Listening.*] The door shuts, now the song 's done.

What was it ?

What sang'st thou, boy ?

Giu. A song of Hope, sir.

Ago. Hope !

What hope !

Giu. I will repeat it, sir, so please you ?

The words, not music. [*He repeats the words.*]

'Tis a song my lady

Is fond of.

Ago. When she's troubled most with sickness ?

Giu. No, sir, I think when she's most cheerful.

Ago. That

Paper within thy vest—Is that the words ?

Give it me.

Giu. Nay, sir, it is none of mine.

Ago. Give it me, boy.

Giu. I may not, sir.—I will not.

Ago. Play not the lion's cub with me. That letter
Was given thee by Antonio Rondinelli.

He, and the profane wit, Fulvio da Riva,
Were seen this morning by the Baptistry,
Talking with thee. Give it me ; or myself
Will take the answer to Antonio's house
In bloody characters.

Giu. [*Aside.*] 'Tis a most sacred letter,
And ought to fell him like a cuff o' the conscience.
Farewell, my place ! Farewell, my lady sweet !
Giulio is gone.—There is the letter, sir ;

Take it, [*Aside.*] and be a devil choked with scripture.

Ago. Unopen'd ! come—thou meanest me well,
Giulio ?

Ah !—but—why didst thou loiter in thy message ?
How came it that this fair epistle kiss'd not
The lady's fairer hands ? for that's the style.

Giu. It did, sir.

Ago. Did !

Giu. Yes, sir, my lady had it.

[*Aside.*] How like you that ?—You have not read the
whole

On the outside. [*Aside.*] His very joy torments him.

Ago. She read it not, like the good lady she is ;
But yet you gave it her.

Giu. He read it me ;
He did,—the noble Antonio read it me,
To save my youth, every way, from harm. [*dress'd*
Ago. [*Aside*]. Some vile double signification, ad-
To riper brains, must have secur'd the words.
The foresight was too gross, if not a coward's !
There has been, after all, I needs must own it,
A strange forbearance for so hot a lover
In this Antonio. It is now five years
Since first he sought Ginevra ; nearly four
Since still he lov'd her, though another's wife ;
And—saving that his face is to be noted
Looking at hers wherever it appears,
At church, or the evening walk, or tournament,—
And that I've mark'd him drooping hereabouts,
Yet rather as some witless, lonely man,
Than one that shunn'd me,—my sharp household
Have fix'd on no confusion of his making ; [*eyes*
No blush ; no haste ; no tactics of the chamber ;
No pertness of loud servant—not till now—
Till now ;—but then this *now* may show all this
To have been but a more deep and quiet mastery
Of crime and devilish knowledge—too secure
To move uneasily,—and too high scornful
Of me, to give me even the grace of trouble.
And yet this seal unbroken, and these words—

[*Reading.*

“ Most harmless ;—I dare to add, most virtuous ? ”
And here again below ;—

“ I have written what I have written on the
outside of this letter, hoping that it may move you
to believe the possibility of its not being unworthy
to meet the purest of mortal eyes.”

Filthiest hypocrite ! caught in his own bird-lime.

[*Opens and reads the letter.*

“ As you have opened neither my first letter nor
my second, written at intervals of six months each,

from the moment when my name was first again mentioned to you since your marriage, I hardly dare hope that the words I am now writing shall have the blessedness of being looked upon, although they truly deserve it.

"Truly, for most piteously they deserve it. I am going to reward (may I utter such a word?) your kindness, by the greatest and most dreadful return I can make it. I will write to you no more.

"But this promise is a thing so terrible to me, and so unsupportable except in the hope of its doing you some good, that I have one reward to beg for myself; not as a condition, but as a last and enduring charity.

"I no longer ask you to love me, however innocently, or on the plea of its being some shadow of relief to you (in the sweet thought of loving) from an unhappiness, of which all the world speaks.

[AGOLANTI *pauses, greatly moved.*

Is it so then? and the world speaks of me,
And basely speaks! He has been talking, then,
And acting too. But let me know this *all*.

[*Reading.*

"Neither yet will I beg you not to hate me; for so gentle a heart cannot hate anybody; and you never were unjust, except to yourself.

[*Pauses a little again.*

"But this I do beg; first, that you will take care of a health, which heaven has given you no right to neglect, whatever be your unhappiness, and which, under heaven, is the best support of it;—and secondly, that when you think of the friends of whom death has deprived you, or may deprive, and whom it will give you joy to meet again beyond the grave, you may not be unwilling to behold among them the face of

"ANTONIO RONDINELLI.

"Written with prayers and tears before the sacred image of the Virgin."

[AGOLANTI crosses himself, and pauses; then holds the letter apart, as if in disgust; and then again resumes his self-possession.

Giulio, I think since first I took thee from
The orphan college, now some three years back,
I have been no unkind master to thee, nor poor one;
Have stinted thee in nought fitting thy station,
Nor hurt thy growth and blooming?

Giu. Sir, you hired me

For certain duties, which, with kindly allowance
For faults of youth, I hope I have perform'd.
My life has been most happy; and my lady
Most bountiful to her poor songster. [Sheds tears.

Ago. Thou

Hast haply saved some little treasure then,
Against thy day of freedom?

Giu. Not a doit, sir.

What freedom should I think of, being free
From thought itself, and blithe as the blue day?

Ago. Antonio Rondinelli is not rich.

His mother and he hide in proud poverty
From all but a few friends.

Giu. [Aside.] Noble Antonio!

He gave me a jewel, ere I knew him poor,
Worth twenty golden florins; and his cap
Starv'd for it many a month.

Ago. New employers

Produce new duties, Giulio; to the hurt
Sometimes of old ones; and 'tis wise betimes
To see they vex and tangle not. These mixtures
Of services,—these new pure confidences
With masters not thine own,—these go-betweens
'Twixt virtue and virtue,—loves desiring not
Their own desires,—and such like angel-adulteries
(Heav'n pardon me the word!)—suit me not, Giulio,
Nor a wise house. Therefore, before thine innocent
Lady, (for such, with mutual love, I own her,
And scorn of this poor fop) learns dangerous pity

Of thy fair-seeming messages,—dangerous,
 Not to her virtue, but her virtue's fame,—
 This house thou leavest. Thou wouldst taste the
 Of poverty, and will, and kinless freedom— [pride
 Do so! And when thou learn'st how friendship
 In treachery and in thanklessness begun, [ends,
 And the cold crust turns bitter and quarrelsome,
 Blame not thou me; nor think those tears are pay-
 For guilt on thy side, and for love on mine! [ment
Giulio [*Aside.*] Love! what a word from him.
 and to poor me,
 Thus thrust upon the world, he knows not whither!
 [*Aloud*]. Sir, you mistake my tears; but 'tis no
 Guilty or not, I cannot quit this house [matter.
 With thoughts less kind than sorrow.—Sir, fare-
 well. [*Exit.*

Ago. 'Twas virtuously done, if not most falsely,
 This seemingly celestial aversion
 Of the very eyesight from unlawful words.
 Or was it part of the system?—of the show,—
 Which frets me daily with malign excess
 Of undemanded patience? cold at best,
 Resentful as the worst! Antonio,
 I do suspect, she loves not; me, I know, [bound
 She hates; me, whom she should love; whom was
 And sworn to love; for which contempt and wrong,
 Fools, that love half a story and whole blame,
 Begin to babble against the person wrong'd!
 Times are there, when I feel inclin'd to sweep
 The world away from me, and lead my own
 Life to myself, unlook'd into with eyes
 That know me not; but use, and sympathy
 Even with those that wrong me, and the right
 Of comely reputation, keep me still
 Wearing a show of good with a griev'd heart.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. My lady, sir, hearing of your return

Home suddenly, and having visitors,
Entreats the honour of your presence.

Ago. (*aside*). Now
To test this hateful gossip. "Suddenly ;"—
Was that her word, or the knave's ? No matter.
Who are they ? [(*Aloud*) Visitors,—

Serv. Lady Olimpia, and her friend
Lady Diana, with two gentlemen ;
Strangers, I think, sir ; one a Roman gentleman,
Come from his Holiness's court.

Ago. The same,
Doubtless, I saw this morning ; by which token
The other is the sneering amorist,
Da Riva. He, I thought, respected me ;
But see—he knows these women, they Antonio—
Have I been hasty ? or is—The black plague choke
All meddlers with— [*To the Servant.*

I will come speedily.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III. — *Another Room in AGOLANTI'S house.*
GINEVRA, OLIMPIA, DIANA, COLONNA, and DA RIVA,
discovered sitting. FIORDILISA *standing behind her*
lady's chair.

Olim. Dearest lady Ginevra, to remain
Shut up when all the world are at the windows,
Or otherwise owning the great common joy,
Is clearly impossible.—Observe now, pray :—
On Friday the Pope comes ; Saturday, chapel
At the Annunziata ;—Sunday, at Saint Lorenzo ;
Monday, the chase ; Tuesday, the race ; Wednes-
day,
The tilts and drama ; and on Thursday he goes.
So there's six lives for you ; a life a day,
To make you well again, and merry, and careless.

Col. Most vital arguments ?

Gin.

Too vital, may-be.

Remember, Lady Olympia, I have been ill ;—
I am but getting better, and such draughts
Of pleasure and amazement, pour'd unceasing,
Might drown the little faculties of poor me.

Diana. One day—could you not try one day, and
Enjoy or fear another as it suited ? [then

Olim. Ay, one—one—one. Try but one day, and
then

Trust me if one day would not give you strength
For pretty little two, and prettier three.

Riva. And, madam, the first day is both the noblest
And the most gentle,—a flow of princely draperies
Through draperied streets ; bringing us, it is true,
Emotion, but yet soothing it, and blessing
With sacred hand. Weakness itself is touch'd
At ceremonial sights like these, with sweet
And no unstrengthening tears, bathing humility
In heavenly reassurance. And, dear lady,
'Twill give a nature, so composed as yours
With Christian grace and willing cheerfulness,
A joy at once sacred, and earthly, and charming,
To see the face of the accomplish'd man
Whom Providence, most potent seen, when mildest,
Has raised to be the prince of Christendom
In this our day, when wit is questioning faith,
And mild religion answers with *his* eyes
Of charity, the unanswerable conclusion.

Col. Da Riva, I am to bring thy verse and thee
To his beatitude's most knowing knowledge ;
But do thou step before me, and speak thus,
And thou art made a cardinal.

Gin. Is his Holiness
So very and so beautifully gracious
To eloquence and letters ?

Col. I' faith, madam,
Our blessed Father seems to be of opinion,
That whatsoever good or beauty exists
Must needs belong, like angels, to the church ;

And as he finds them, where severer men
 (Not the best judges of angels) might o'erlook them,
 He makes us know them better ; bids them come
 Forth from the crowd, and show their winged wits,
 And rise, and sit within his princely beams.

Olim. Come ;—you accord ? you cannot resist
 reasons

Sweet as all these ? and to say truth, there is
 One gentle reason more, which must convince you.
 We want your husband's windows, lady mine ;—
 They face the veriest heaven of all the streets
 For seeing the procession ; and how can we
 Enter that paradise of a balcony
 Without the house's angel ? What would people
 Say to the intruders, you not being there ?

Gin. Oh, nothing very unseasonable, be sure ;
 Nor what the lilies and roses in their cheeks,
 And wit in their eyes, could not refute most happily.
 Well, dear Diana, should my husband's judgment
 Encourage me to think my health would bear it,
 I would fain venture, but—I hear him coming.
 At all events, the windows will be gladly
 Fill'd with your pleasures ; the report of which
 Will afterwards make them mine.

Enter AGOLANTI.

Sir, the ladies

Olimpia and Diana you know well ;
 Also a name honour'd by all, Da Riva ;
 Be pleas'd to know their friend, a courteous gentle-
 man
 From Rome, the Signor Cesare Colonna.

Ago. He 's welcome for his friend's sake, and his
 own.

I trust our holy Father keeps his health, sir,
 In this his gracious journey ?

Col. Sir, he holds him,
 As his good habit is, in blest condition,

To the great joy of all that love good men
And sovereign church.

Ago. You hold, sir, I perceive,
Some happy office near his sacred person ?

Col. One of the poor captains of his guard, sir ;
Not near enough to make the fortune proud,
Nor yet so far remov'd as not to share
Some grace of recognition.

Ago. I may not envy you :
But I may be allow'd to think such fortune
As happy, as 'tis worthily bestow'd.
Pardon me ; but this lady's delicate health
Will warrant some small trespass on your courtesies.
[To GINEVRA.] How fares it with my love these last
three hours ?

Gin. [Cheerfully.] Thanks—I do very well.

Olim. I fear we have tired her
Somewhat, with our loud talk, Signor Francesco.

Gin. No ; 'tis like bright health come to talk
with us :

Is it not ? [To her husband.]

Ago. [Aside.] She knows I hate it.—Lady Olimpia
Brings ever a sprightly stirring to the spirit,
And her fair friend a balm. [Aside to GINEVRA.]

What want they now,
This flaunter and this insipidity ? [bring a petition,

Gin. [Aloud.] Our neighbour and her friends
That it would please you to convenience them
With your fair windows for the coming spectacle ;
Yourself, if well enough, doubling the grace
With your good company.

Ago. [Aside.] I thought as much.
At every turn my will is to be torn from me,
And at her soft suggestion. [Aloud.] My windows
Cannot be better fill'd, than with such beauty,
And wit and modest eloquence.

Col. [Aside to DA RIVA.] Is he sneering ?
Or is his zeal, and fame for polite manners.

Proving itself, in spite of his own teeth ?
Sharpening its edge upon this oily venom ?

Riva. Somewhat of both ; he sneers, because he
hates us :

And would not have it seen, because he fears us.
His will and vanity count on our obtuseness,
Just as it suits them.

[AGOLANTI and the Ladies talk apart.]

Col. Noticed you how pale
The unhappy lady turn'd, when the song ended,
And she bade shut the door ?

Riva. She's paler now.
Let's interrupt him.—Good Signor Francesco,
We thank you much ; but windows, friends, and
And let us add, warranted by his love, [spectacle,
Husband and all, would miss the topmost flower
Of our delight, were this sweet lady absent ;
And she has threaten'd us with the cruel chance,
Unless your better knowledge of her health
Think better, than herself, of its free right.

Ago. Oh, sir, it were impossible to know
A lady better than she knows herself.

What say you, Madam ? [To GINEVRA.]

Gin. The best thought of all,
Perhaps, were to await the time's arrival,
And see how I feel then.

Ago. Truly, methinks,
A discreet judgment, and approved by all,
Who set the lady's welfare above all,
As we in this room do.

Olim. And every one
That knows her,—unless it be the devil himself.
Manners forgive my uttering his name
In such good company. Dearest Ginevra,
Come you with me. A word with you in private,
As we descend. And we'll request these gentlemen
To clear our way before us.

Col. and *Riva.* A fair day

To Signor Agolanti, and may fairer

Befall us this day week.

[*Going.*—

Olim.

Yes, Signor mine,

Be sure you make your wife well by that day,
With some transcendent charmingness ; or none

But envious wives, and horrible old men,

Will think you the good spouse you are, or let you
Have any peace.

Ago. [*Fiercely to his wife as she is going.*] What insolence is this,

And woman's plot? Be in the purple chamber
In twenty minutes. Do you hear me *speak*?

[*He wrings her hand sharply, and she makes signs of obedience.*]

A fair day to my courteous visitors,

And may they ever have the joy they bring.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Garden of Diana's Villa.*

Enter RONDINELLI, COLONNA, and DA RIVA.

Col. I pray thee, Antonio, be comforted.

Ron. I am, I am ; as far as friends can comfort
And they do comfort. How can I love love, [me :
And not love all things lovely? sweet discourse,
And kindness, and dear friendships. But this suffering
Sweet saint,—the man, the household fiend, I mean—
Will kill her.

Col. I tell thee, no. In the first place
Her health is really better. Is it not?

Riva. Olimpia and Diana both have staked
Their credit on it. The man's a fool no doubt,
But she is wise.

Col. Ay, is she ; for lo ! secondly,
She loves thee, Antonio.

Riva. Yes ; by that pure look
We told thee of, at mention of thy name,
She does :—it was as though her mind retreated
To some blest, serious thought, far off but possible ;
Then ended with a sigh.

Col. And blush'd withal.
[*Aside.*] I did not see the blush, I must confess ;
But being so virtuous, there must have been one,
And he'll be glad to hear of it. [*Aloud*]. Well, seeing
She loves thee then, as thou must needs believe,
For all that modest earthquake of thine head,
Bethink thee what a life *within* a life
She has to retire into, sweet and secret,
For help from common temper such as his ;
Help, none the worse, eh ? for a small, small bit
Of stubbornness, such as the best gentle wives
Must have in self-defence. Now——

Ron. Fear me not.
Such blessed thoughts must needs give me some com-
And I sha'n't quarrel with the comfort's fashion. [*fort* ;

Col. Well then, you'll let me have my fashion out ?
You'll let me speak after my old blithe mood,
Secure of my good meaning ?

Ron. Ay, and thankfully.

Col. Why then, sir, look ; there are a hundred
In Florence, and a hundred more to those, [*marriages*
And hundreds to those hundreds, bad as this ;
As ill assorted, and as lover-hated ;
(Always allowing for the nobler difference,
And therefore greater power to bear) ; and yet
They do not kill ; partly, because of lovers ;
Partly, of pride ; partly, indifference ;
Partly, of hate (a good staunch long-lived passion) ;
Partly, because all know the common case,
And custom's custom. There'll be a hundred cou-
ples

To-night, 'twixt Porta Pinti and San Gallo,
Cutting each other's hearts out with mild looks,
Upon the question, whether the Pope's mule
Will be in purple or scarlet ;—yet not one
Will die of it ; no, 'faith ; nor were a death
To happen, would the survivors' eyes refuse
A tear to their old disputant and partner,
That kept life moving somehow.

Ron. By which logic,
You would infer, to comfort me, that all
Marriages are unhappy.

Col. Not unhappy,
Although not very happy.

Rica. With exceptions ?

Col. Surely——for such good fellows as ourselves !

Rica. And doubtless
A time will come——

Col. Oh, ay ; a time will come—
Poet and prophet—*Redeunt Saturnia regna.*

Now hear him on his favourite golden theme,
“A time will come ;”—a time, eh ? when all marriages
Shall be like some few dozen ; exceptions, rules ;
Every day, Sunday ; and each man's pain in the
A crowning satisfaction ! [head

Rica. No ; but still
A time, when sense and reason shall have grown
As much more rife than now, and foolish thorns
As much less in request, as we, now living,
Surpass rude times and savage ancestors.
Improvement stopp'd not at the muddy cave,
Why at the rush-strewn room ? The wild man's
dream,

Or what he might have dreamt, when at his wildest,
Is, to the civilised man, his commonplace :
And what should time so reverence in ourselves,
As, in his due good course, not still to alter ;

Col. Till chariots run some twenty miles an hour ?

Rica. Ay, thirty or forty.

Col. Oh! oh! Without horses?
Say, without horses.

Rica. Well, to oblige you,—yes.

Col. And sailing-boats without a sail! Ah, ha!
Well, glory be to poetry and to poets!

Their cookery is no mincing! Ah! ha! ha!
[*They both laugh.*]

They certainly, while they're about it, do
Cut and carve worlds out with their golden swords,
To which poor Alexander's was a pumpkin.
What say you, Antonio?

Ron. My dear friends both,
What you were saying of the good future time
Made me but think too sadly of the present;
Pardon me—I should think more sadly far,
But for your loves and ever generous patience.
Yet let me take you back to our fair friends,
From whom my gusty griefs bore you away.
Nay, my good wish rewards me:—see, one comes.

Enter OLIMPIA.

Olim. A certain Giulio, in a pretty grief
Though for himself alone, and not another,
Inquires for Signor Rondinelli.

[*ANTONIO kisses her hand and exit.*]

'Twas lucky that I saw this Giulio first,
For he's a page of pages; a Spartan boy;—
Quite fix'd on telling his beloved Signor
Antonio all the truths which the said Signor
May now, or at any time in all futurity,
Insist on knowing. Poor fellow! he's turned away.

Rica. For what?

Olim. Come in,
And you shall hear. Your ices and sherbets
Await you; and your cheeks will need the cooling.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*A Chamber hung with purple, and containing a cabinet picture of the Madonna, but otherwise little furnished. GINEVRA discovered sitting at a window.*

Enter AGOLANTI.

Ago. Every way she opposes me, even with arms
Of peace and love. I bade remove that picture
From this deserted room. Can she have had it
Brought back this instant, knowing how my anger,
Just though it be, cannot behold unmoved
The face of suffering heaven? Oh artifice
In very piety! 'twere piety to veil it
From our discourse, and look another way.

[During this speech, GINEVRA comes forward, and AGOLANTI, after closing the cabinet doors over the picture, hands her a chair; adjusting another for himself, but continuing to stand.]

Gin. *[Cheerfully.]* The world seems glad after
its hearty drink
Of rain. I fear'd when you came back this morning,
The shower had stopp'd you, or that you were ill.

Ago. You fear'd! you hoped. What fear you
that I fear,

Or hope for that I hope for? A truce, madam,
To these exordiums and pretended interests,
Whose only shallow intent is to delay,
Or to divert, the sole dire subject,—me.
Soh! you would see the spectacle! you, who start
At openings of doors, and falls of pins.

Trumpets and drums quiet a lady's nerves;
And a good hacking blow at a tournament
Equals burnt feathers or hartshorn, for a stimulus
To pretty household tremblers.

Gin. I express'd
No wish to see the tournament, nor indeed
Anything, of my own accord; or contrary
To your good judgment.

Ago. Oh, of course not. Wishes
Are never express'd for, or by, contraries ;
Nor the good judgment of an anxious husband
Held forth as a pleasant thing to differ with.

Gin. It is as easy as sitting in my chair,
To say I will not go : and I will not.
Be pleas'd to think that settled.

Ago. The more easily,
As 'tis expected I *should* go, is it not ?
And then you will sit happy at receipt
Of letters from Antonio Rondinelli.

Gin. Return'd unopen'd, sir.

Ago. How many !

Gin. Three.

Ago. You are correct, as to those three. How many
Open'd !—Your look, madam, is wondrous logical ;
Conclusive by mere pathos of astonishment ;
And cramm'd with scorn, from pure unscornfulness.
I have, 'tis true, strong doubts of your regard
For him, or any one ;—of your love of power
None,—as you know I have reason ;—tho' you take
Ways of refined provokingness to wreak it.
Antonio knows these fools you saw but now,
And fools have foolish friendships, and bad leagues
For getting a little power, not natural to them,
Out of their laugh'd-at betters. Be it as it may,
All this, I will not have these prying idlers
Put my domestic troubles to the blush ;
Nor you sit thus, in ostentatious meekness,
Playing the victim with a pretty breath,
And smiles that say "God help me."—Well, madam,
What do *you* say ?

Gin. I say I will do whatever
You think best, and desire.

Ago. And make the worst of it
By whatsoever may mislead, and vex ?
There—now you make a pretty sign, as tho'
Your silence were compell'd.

Gin. What can I say,
Or what, alas ! not say, and not be chided ?
You should not use methus. I have not strength for it,
So great as you may think. My late sharp illness
Has left me weak.

Ago. I've known you weaker, madam,
But never feeble enough to want the strength
Of contest and perverseness. Oh, men too,
Men may be weak, even from the magnanimity
Of strength itself ; and women can take poor
Advantages, that were in men but cowardice.

Gin. [*Aside.*] Dear Heaven ! what humblest
doubts of our self-knowledge
Should we not feel, when tyranny can talk thus.

Ago. Can you pretend, madam, with your surpass-
Candour and heavenly kindness, that you never [*ing*
Utter'd one gently-sounding word, not meant
To give the hearer pain ? me pain ? your husband ?
Whom in all evil thoughts you so pretend
To be unlike.

Gin. I cannot dare pretend it.
I am a woman, not an angel.

Ago. Ay,
See there—you have ! you own it ! how pretend then
To make such griefs of every petty syllable,
Wrung from myself by everlasting scorn ?

Gin. One pain is not a thousand ; nor one wrong,
Acknowledged and repented of, the habit
Of unprovoked and unrepented years.

Ago. Of unprovoked ! Oh, let all provocation
Take every brutish shape it can devise
To try endurance with ; taunt it in failure,
Grind it in want, stoop it with family shames,
Make gross the name of mother, call it fool.
Pander, slave, coward, or whatsoever opprobrium
Makes the soul swoon within its rage, for want
Of some great answer, terrible as its wrong,
And it shall be as nothing to this miserable,

Mean, meek-voic'd, most malignant lie of lies,
 This angel-mimicking non-provocation
 From one too cold to enrage, too weak to tread on !
 You never lov'd me once—You lov'd me not—
 Never did—no—not when before the altar
 With a mean coldness, a worldly-minded coldness
 And lie on your lips, you took me for your husband,
 Thinking to have a house, a purse, a liberty,
 By, but not for, the man you scorn'd to love !

Gin. I scorn'd you not—and knew not what scorn
 was—

Being scarcely past a child, and knowing nothing
 But trusting thoughts and innocent daily habits.
 Oh, could you trust yourself—But why repeat
 What still is thus repeated, day by day,
 Still ending with the question, "Why repeat?"

[*Rising and moving about.*]

You make the blood at last mount to my brain,
 And tax me past endurance. What have I done,
 Good God ! what have I done, that I am thus
 At the mercy of a mystery of tyranny,
 Which from its victim demands every virtue,
 And brings it none ?

Ago. I thank you, madam, humbly.
 That was sincere, at least.

Gin. I beg your pardon.
 Anger is ever excessive, and speaks wrong.

Ago. This is the gentle, patient, unprovok'd,
 And unprovoking, never-answering she !

Gin. Nay, nay, say on ;—I do deserve it,—I
 Who speak such evil of anger, and then am angry.
 Yet you might pity me too, being like yourself
 In fellowship there at least.

Ago. A taunt in friendliness !
 Meekness's happiest condescension !

Gin. No,
 So help me Heaven !—I but spoke in consciousness
 Of what was weak on both sides. There's a love

In that, would you but know it, and encourage it.
The consciousness of wrong, in wills not evil,
Brings charity. Be you but charitable,
And I am grateful, and we both shall learn.

Ago. I am conscious of no wrong in this dispute,
Nor when we dispute ever,—except the wrong
Done to myself by a will far more wilful,
Because less moved, and less ingenuous.
Let them get charity that show it.

Gin. [*who has reseated herself.*] I pray you,
Let Fiordilisa come to me. My lips
Will show you that I faint.

[*AGOLANTI rings a bell on the table ; and FIORDILISA enters to her mistress.*

Ago. When you have seen your mistress well
again,
Go to Matteo, and tell him, from herself,
That 'tis her orders she be excused at present
To all that come, her state requiring it,
And convalescence. Mark you that addition.
She 's getting well ; but to get well, needs rest.

[*Exit.*

Fior. Needs rest ! Alas ! When will you let her
rest,

But in her grave ? my lady ! My sweet mistress !

[*Applying a volatile to her temples.*

She knows me.—He has gone :—the Signor 's gone.

[*Aside.*] She sighs as though she mourn'd him.

Gin. [*listening.*] What 's that ?

Fior. Nothing, madam ;—I heard nothing.

Gin. Everything

Gives me a painful wonder ;—you, your face,
These walls. My hand seems to me not more human,
Than animal ; and all things unaccountable.
Twill pass away. What 's that ?

[*A church-organ is heard.*

Fior. Yes, I hear that.

'Tis Father Anselmo, madam, in the chapel,

Touching the new organ. In truth, I ask'd him,
Thinking that as the Signor is so mov'd
By whatsoever speaks to him of religion,
It might have done no harm to you, and him, madam,
To hear it while conversing. But he's old
And slow as the good father.

[GINEVRA *kisses her, and then weeps abundantly.*

Gin. Thank Heaven! thank Heaven and the
sweet sounds! I have not
Wept, Fiordilisa, now, for many a day,
And the sound freshens me;—loosens my heart.

[*Music**

O blessed music! at thy feet we lie,
Pitied of angels surely.

Fior. Perhaps, madam,

You will rest here, and try to sleep awhile?

Gin. No, Fiordilisa [*rising*]. Meeting what must
Is half commanding it; and in this breath [be,
Of heaven, my mind feels duty set erect,
Fresh out of tears. Bed is for night, not day,
When duty's done. So cheer we as we may.

[*Exeunt; the music continuing.*

* I trust that the "touch of nature which makes the whole world kin," and the delight which nations experience at all evidences of graceful feeling in their princes, particularly when accompanied by actual beneficence, will save me from a charge of indecorum in stating, that on the second night of her Majesty's presence at the performance of this play, when the lovely organ strain, composed by my friend Vincent Novello, began here to double the tears of the audience, a fair hand was observed to come from behind the royal curtain, and press the congenial arm next to it, as if in affecting remembrance.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in AGOLANTI'S Villa.**Enter AGOLANTI.*

Ago. What have I done, great heavens! to be
thus tortur'd?

My gates beset with these inquisitive fools;
A wife, strong as her hate, so I be dumb,
Falling in gulfs of weakness for a word;
And all the while, dastardly nameless foes,
Who know where I am weak, filling my household
With talk of ominous things,—sad mourning shapes
That walk my grounds, none knowing how they
enter'd;

And in the dead of night, outcries for help,
As of a female crouching to the door.
Let me be met by daylight, man to man,
If 'tis to come to this; and to loud lies
Answer with my contempt, and with my sword.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. The gentlemen that were here the other day,
Signor Da Riva, and the Roman gentleman,
Desire to kiss your hands.

Ago. Fool! were not orders
Given you to admit no one?

Serv. To my lady, sir;
We did not understand to you.

Ago. Idiots and torments!

Enter DA RIVA and COLONNA. Exit Servant.

Col. We kiss your hands, courteous Signor Fran-
cesco.

Riva. And come to thank you for the seats you have given us.

In all the city there is no such throne
Of comfort, for a sovereign command
Of the best part o' the show; which will be glorious.

Col. And with your lady for the queen o' the throne,
The Pope himself may look up as he walks.
And worship you with envy.

Ago. Nay, sirs, you are too flattering. Perhaps
The lady—

Col. And what makes us the more delighted
With your determination thus to give her
Unto the grateful spectacle, is a certain
Vile talk, sir, that has come to our disdainful
And most incredulous ears of—What do you think?

Riva. Ay, sir, 'twill tax your fancy.

Col. Of your jealousy;
Nay cruelty, forsooth!

Riva. We laugh'd it down;
Look'd it i' the foolish face, and made it blush.
Yes, sir, the absurdity was put out of countenance;
But then, you know, that countenance was but one;
And twenty absurd grave faces, going about,
Big with a scandal, are as fertile as bees,
And make as busy multitudes of fools. [news—

Ago. Sirs, with this sudden incursion of strange
And your as strange, I must say, though well-meant
Fancy, of the necessity of retuting it—

Col. Fancy, good sir!—Dear sir, we are most
To shock your noble knowledge of yourself [loth
With the whole truth—with the whole credulous
fiction;

But to convince you how requisite is the step
Thus to be taken in the truth's behalf,
The theme is constant, both in court and market-
That you're a very tyrant! [place,

Riva. And to a saint!
Vex her from morn to night—

Col. Frighten her—

Riva. Cast her
Into strange swoons, and monstrous shows of death.

Ago. Monstrous indeed! and shows! That is
most true.

Those are the shows! and I am to be at the spec-
To let her face make what display it can [tacle
Of the mean lie, and mock me to the world.

Pardon me—I'm disturb'd—I'm not myself— [is?
My house is not quite happy—you see it—Whose
But look, sir,—Why should Florence fall on me?

Why select me, as the scape-goat of a common
And self-resented misery! 'Tis a lie,

A boy's lie, a turn'd-off servant's lie,

That mine is a worse misery than their own,

Or more deserv'd. You know the Strozzi family,

You know the Baldi, Rossi, Brunelleschi—

You do, Signor Da Riva,—the Guidi also

And Arregucci :—well,—are they all smiles?

All comfort? Is there, on the husbands' sides,

No roughness? no plain-speaking? or, on the wives',

No answering, tart or otherwise?—no black looks?

No softest spite; nor meekness, pale with malice?

No smile with the teeth set, shivering forth a sneer?

Take any dozen couples, the first you think of,

Those you know best; and see, if matrimony

Has been success with them, or a dull failure;

Dull at the best; probably, damn'd with discord;

A hell, the worse for being carried about

With quiet looks; or horriblest of all,

Betwixt habitual hate and fulsome holiday.

Riva. Oh, sir, you wrong poor mix'd humanity,

And think not how much nobleness relieves it,

Nor what a heap of good old love there lies

Sometimes in seeming quarrel. I thought you, sir,

I must confess, a more enduring Christian.

Col. And churchman, sir. I own I have been
astonish'd—

Pardon one somewhat nearer than yourself
 Unto the church's prince—to hear you speak
 Thus strangely of a holy ordinance.

Ago. [*Aside*]. These men will make me mad. Have
 they come here [earth
 To warn me, or to torment me?—[*Aloud*]. Sir, the
 Holds not a man bows down with lowlier front
 To holy church and to all holy ordinances :
 It is their worldly violation mads me.
 If my poor name be ever in sacred mouths,
 I pray thee say so ; and add, I am a man
 Not happy quite perhaps, more than some others
 Of mankind's fallen race, in my home's Eve ;
 Who, with some humours, yet is good as fair,
 And only makes me unhappy in the excess
 Of my desire to make herself most blessed.
 My conscience thus discharged, look'ye, fair sir,—
 A man of a less trusting sort—

Enter a Servant.

Serv. My lady, sir,
 Being worse since her last seizure at day-break,
 The Nurse would fain send in the neighbourhood
 For—

Ago. Bid her do so. Tell her to send instantly
 For whom she pleases. [*Exit Servant.*] You will
 pardon me ;—
 This troubled house of mine—At the good spectacle
 I shall behold you.

Col. We take anxious leave, sir,
 Wishing you all good speed with the sweet lady.
 But something we had forgotten in our zeal
 To tell our own poor story, tho' we came
 Partly to give it you,—a letter, sir,
 From a most dear and excellent friend of ours ;
 Who, we dare say it, for reasons which your delicacy
 Will be glad, too, to turn to like fair grace
 Of liberal trust and gentle interpretation,

Wishes your house all good and quiet fame.
 'Tis something very special that he writes of,
 So he assures us, and of instant urgency ;
 But what we know not.

[*Exeunt.*

Ago. [*reads.*] "If Signor Agolanti values his wife's peace, *and life*, he will meet the writer of this letter instantly ; who will wait for him, an hour from the receipt of it, in the wood near his gate, by the road-side leading to Cortona.

"ANTONIO RONDINELLI."

'Tis as I fear'd. He knows them, as I thought,
 And well ? Is it a league ? Conspiracy ?
 And face to face too ! He ! This beats all boldness.
 'Sdeath, must my time be *his* too ! What strange
 matter

Can give him right of speech ! "Her life !" Who
 What bloody juggle is to beset me now ? [*seeks it ?*
 I'll meet thee, Antonio ; and before we part,
 Strange mystery shall be pluck'd from some one's
 heart.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II. *A Wood.* RONDINELLI *discovered waiting.*

Ron. My bosom is so full, my heart wants air ;
 It fears even want of utterance ; fears the man,
 For very loathing ; fears his horrible right,
 His lawless claim of lawfulness ; and feels
 Shame at his poisonous want of shame and manhood.
 Yet she endures him ; she can smile to him,
 Would have him better. Oh, heavenly Ginevra !
 Name, which to breathe puts pity in the air,
 I know that to deserve to be thy friend
 Should be to show all proofs of gentlest right.
 Oh be the spirit of thine hand on mine ;—
 Hang by me, like a light, a face, an angel,
 To whom I turn for privilege of blest patience,
 Letting me call thee my soul's wife !

He comes.

Enter AGOLANTI.

Ago. I recognise the Signor Rondinelli ;
And in him, if I err not, the inditer
Of a strange letter.—He would speak with me ?

Ron. Pardon me. I am sensible that I trespass
On many delicacies, which at first confuse me.
Be pleased to look upon them all as summ'd
In this acknowledgment, and as permitted me
To hold acquitted in your coming hither.
I would fain speak all calmly and christianly.

Ago. You spoke of my wife's life. 'Twas that
that brought me.

Ron. Many speak of it.

Ago. To what end ?

Ron. They doubt

If you are aware on what a delicate thread
It hangs.

Ago. Mean you of health ?

Ron. I do.

Ago. 'Twere strange

If I knew not the substance of the tenure,
Seeing it daily.

Ron. A daily sight—pardon me—
May, on that very account, be but a dull one.—
I pray you, do not think I use plain words
From wish to offend : I have but one object—such
As all must have, who know, or ever have known,
The lady,—you above all others.

Ago. Truly, sir,
You, and these knowing friends of yours, or hers,
Whom I know not, might leave the proverb alone,
Which says that a fool knows better what occurs
In his own house, than a wise man does in another's.
Good Signor Antonio, I *endure* you
Out of a sort of pity : you understand me ;
Perhaps not quite a just one. This same letter
Is not the first of yours, that has intruded
Into my walls.

Ron. We understand each other
In some things, Signor Agolanti, and well ;
In some things one of us is much mistaken ;
But one thing we know perfectly, both of us,—
The spotlessness of her, concerning whom
We speak, with conscious souls, thus face to face.—
Signor Agolanti, I humbly beg of you, [welcome,
Well nigh with tears, which you may pity, and
So you deny them not, that it will please you
To recollect, that the best daily eyes,
The wisest and the kindest, made secure
By custom and gradation, may see not
In the fine dreadful fading of a face
What others see.

Ago. Signor Antonio,—
When others allow others to rule their houses,
To dictate commonplaces, and to substitute
For long experience and uncanting love
Their meddling self-sufficiency, their envious
Wish to find fault, and most impertinent finding it,
When this is the custom and the fashion, then,
And not till then, will I throw open my doors
To all my kind good masters of fair Florence,
To come and know more in my house than I do ;
To see more, hear more, have a more inward taste
Of whatsoever is sweet and sacred in it,
And then vouchsafe me their opinions : order me
About, like some new household animal
Call'd servant-husband, they being husband-gods,
Yet condescending to all collateral offices
Of gossip, eaves-dropper, consulting-doctor,
Beggary paymaster of discarded page,
Themselves discarded suitor.

Ron. [*Aside.*] Help me, angel,
Against a pride, that, seeing thee, is nothing.—
[*Aloud*]. You know full well, Francesco Agolanti,
That though a suitor for the prize you won
(Oh ! what a prize ! and what a winning ! enough

Surely to make you bear with him that lost),
 Discarded I could not be, never, alas !
 Having found acceptance. My acquaintance
 Not long preceded yours ; and was too brief
 To let my love win on her filial eyes,
 Before your own came beaming with that wealth,
 Which, with all other shows of good and prosperous,
 Her parents justly thought her due. For writing to
 Since, with whatever innocence (as you know) [her
 And for any opinions of yourself
 In which I may have wrong'd you, I am desirous
 To hold my own will in a constant state
 Of pardon-begging and self-sacrifice,
 And will engage never to trouble more
 Your blessed doors (for such I'll hope they will be)
 One thing provided.—Sir, it is,—
 That in consideration of your possessing
 A treasure, which all men will think and speak of
 (The more to the just pride of him that owns it),
 You will be pleased to show, even ostentatiously,
 What more than care, at this supposed sad juncture,
 You take of it : will call in learned eyes
 To judge of what your own too happy ones
 May slide o'er too securely ; will thus revenge
 Your wrong on ill mouths, by refuting them ;
 And secure kindlier ones from the misfortune
 Of being uncharitable towards yourself.

Ago. I will not suffer, more than other men,
 That wrong should be assum'd of me, and bend me
 To what it pleases. What I know, I know ;
 What in that knowledge have done, shall still do.
 The more you speak, the greater is the insult
 To one that asks not your advice, nor needs it ;
 Nor am I to be trick'd into submission
 To a pedantic and o'erweening insolence,
 Because it treats me like a child, with gross
 Self-reconciling needs and sugary fulsomeness.
 Go back to the world you speak of, you yourself,

ne infant ; and learn better from its own school.
 u tire me.

Ron. Stay ; my last words must be heard.—
 nothing then will there be any difference
 om what the world now see ?

Ago. In nothing, fool.—
 hy should there ? Am I a painter's posture-figure ?
 glove to be made to fit ? a public humour ?
 hear you is preposterous ; not to trample you
 favour, which I know not why I show.

Ron. I'll tell you.
 is because you, with cowardly tyranny, [us ;
 resume on the bless'd shape that stands between
 y, with an impudence of your own, immeasurable,
 alk at an angel's skirts.

Ago. I laugh at you.
 nd let me tell you at parting, that the way
 o serve a lady best, and have her faults
 ghtliest admonish'd by her lawful helper,
 not to thrust a lawless vanity
 twixt him and his vex'd love.

Ron. Utter that word
 o second time. Blaspheme not its religion.
 nd mark me, once for all. I know you proud,
 ich, sanguine during passion, sullen after it,
 urchasing shows of mutual respect,
 With bows as low, as their recoil is lofty ;
 And thinking that the world and you, being each
 No better than each other, may thus ever,
 In smooth accommodation of absurdity,
 Move prosperous to your graves. But also I know you
 Misgiving amidst all of it ; more violent
 Than bold, more superstitious ev'n than formal ;
 More propp'd up by the public breath, than vital
 In very self-conceit. Now mark me——

Ago. A beggar
 Mad with detection, barking like his cur !

Ron. Mark me, impostor. Let that saint be worse

By one hair's-breadth of sickness, and you take
 No step to show that you would have prevented it,
 And every soul in Florence, from the beggar
 Up to the princely sacredness now coming,
 Shall be loud on you, and loathe you. Boys shall
 follow you,

Plucking your shuddering skirts ; women forego,
 For woman's sake, their bashfulness, and speak
 Words at you, as you pass ; old friends not know you ;
 Enemies meet you, friend-like ; and when, for shame,
 You shut yourself in-doors, and take to your bed,
 And die of this world by day, and the next by night,
 The nurse, that makes a penny of your pillow,
 And would desire you gone, but your groans pay her,
 Shall turn from the last agony in your throat,
 And count her wages !

Ago. [*drawing his sword.*] Death in thine own throat !

Ron. Tempt me not.

Ago. Coward ! [ness !

Ron. [*drawing his sword*]. All you saints bear wit-
 [Cries of "Agolanti ! Signor Agolanti !"]

Enter Servants in disorder.

First Serv. My lady, sir.

Ago. What of her ?

Serv. Sir, she is dead.

Ago. Thou say'st what cannot be. A hundred
 I've seen her worse than she is now. [times

Ron. Oh horror !

To hear such words, knowing the end !—Oh dreadful !
 But is it true, good fellow ? Thou art a man,
 And hast moist eyes. Say that they served thee dimly.

Serv. Hark, sir.

[*The passing-bell is heard. They all take off their
 caps, except AGOLANTI.*

Ron. She's gone ; and I am alone. Earth's blank ;
 Misery certain.—The cause, alas ! the cause !

[*Passionately to AGOLANTI.*
 Uncover thee, irreverent infamy !

Ago. [*uncovering*]. Infamy thou, to treat thus
A mute-struck sorrow. [ruffianly]

Ron. Oh God ! to hear him talk !
To hear him talk, and know that he has slain her !
Bear witness, you—you of his household—you,
That knew him best, and what a poison he was—
He has slain her.—What you all fear'd would be,
has come,

And the mild thread that held her heart, is broken.

Ago. [*going off with the Servants*]. Pietro, I say,
and Giotto ! away ! away ! [*Exit with Servants.*]

Ron. Ay, ay ; to justice with him ! Whither
with me ? [Exeunt opposite.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the house of DA RIVA. COLONNA, OLIMPIA, and DIANA, discovered, the first looking out of a window. A funeral-bell is tolling at intervals.*

Col. By the moving of the crowd the funeral
No ;—yet I thought I heard the Choristers. [comes.]

Diana. You did. Hark now—

[*A faint sound of Choristers.**]

And now like some sweet sigh
Of heaven and earth it pauses.—You look sadder,
Signor Colonna, than you thought you should,
Within this festal week.

* The dirge here introduced was the composition of my late lamented and rare friend Egerton Webbe, a wit, a scholar, a musician, a gentleman, and a loving son. It is so beautiful and affecting, that the Treasurer of the theatre, Mr. Henry Robertson, who possesses the most refined taste in the art, took it for an effusion of one of the old masters. It is hoped, that the world by-and-by will know more of the compositions, both musical and literary, of the above extraordinary scion of a distinguished family.

Col. 'Faith, gentle lady,
 I'd rather hear upon a winter's night
 A dozen trumpets of the enemy [weakness,
 Blow 'gainst my nestled cheek, than this poor
 Which comes to pass us, standing idly thus,
 Swallowing the lumpish sorrow in one's throat,
 'Twixt rage and pity.

Olim. I have noted oft,
 That eyes, that have kept dry their cups of tears,
 The moment they were touch'd by music's fingers,
 Trembled, brimful.

Diana. It is the meeting, love,
 Of beauty so divine, with earth so weak.
 We swell within us with immortal thoughts,
 And then take pity on the feeble riddle,
 That lies thus cold, and thus rebuk'd in death.

[*Choristers resume, and continue during the dialogue.*

Col. I heard as I came in, one who has seen her
 Laid on the bier, say that she looks most heavenly.

Diana. I saw her lately, as you'll see her now,
 Lying but newly dead, her blind sweet looks
 Border'd with lilies, which her pretty maiden,
 'Twixt tears and kisses, put about her hair,
 To show her spotless life, and that wrong man
 Dared not forbid for very piteous truth ;
 And as she lay thus, not more unresisting
 Than all her life, I pitied even him,
 To think, that let him weep, or ask her pardon
 Never so much, she could not answer more.

Col. They turn the corner now, and now they pass.

[*The Choristers suddenly become loud, and are
 heard passing underneath the window. After
 they have passed, COLONNA resumes.*

Farewell, sweet soul! Death and thy patient life
 Were so well match'd, I scarce can think thee alter'd.

Enter DA RIVA.

How now, Da Riva? Found you not Antonio,

That thus you look amazed ? What is 't ? No harm
To his poor self ?

Riva. None, none ; to him, or any ; [horrible,
None that shall be ; monstrous, and strange, and
As ignorance of the peril might have made it.

Col. }
Olim. } To whom ?
and *Diana.* }

Riva. Prepare to hear, and to endure,
A chance, the very hope of which is awful,
It raises up a vision with a look
So mix'd of life and death.

Col. }
Olim. } What is it ?
and *Diana.* }

Riva. You,
Colonna, will to Antonio instantly,
To keep him ignorant till all be known :
You, my sweet friends, with me, to seek some nest
Of balm and comfort, close upon the spot,
Against a chance—Think me not mad, but hearken

Diana. He has murdered her ! He thought to
And his hand fail'd. [murder her,

Olim. Poison ! Oh Heavens !

Col. [To DA RIVA.] Pray, calm them

Riva. Scarcely ten minutes had I left you here,
When Fiordilisa, paler than her mistress,
Found me with Giulio by Antonio's door.

Col. You have not seen him then ?

Riva. Yes ;—the poor maiden
Told us of an appearance she had noted
All night about the lips of the dear lady,
Which made her call to mind stories, too true,
Of horrors in the dreadful pestilence,
Of hasty shrouds, sleeps found to have been sleeps
And gentle creatures grown so desperate, [only,
That they had rais'd their hands against their lives
For waking to the sense of life itself.

Olim. Where now they bear her !

Diana. Not unknown.

Col. Be tranquil,

Watch has been set ?

Riva. And will look close till morn.

Giulio, from time to time, 'twixt them and us,
Will fly with news ; and meantime sweep we all
Each to our tasks, and bless the hope that sets them.
If true, oh think where but in sleep she lies :
If vain, she still will bless us from the skies.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*A Cemetery, with an open Vault in the back-ground, and a dim noise of revelry, as from some house in the neighbourhood.*

Enter GIULIO [hearkening to the noise].

Giu. What devilishness, and outrage to the dead,
About whose homes the rudest-footed churl
Treads softly, e'en by day ! The noble hearts
I serve, have been so generous, that these drunkards
Count it but as a folly worth their cheating,
And have shut up their promised vigilance
Within the roaring wine-house. (*Noise again.*) Only
Remains within the gate, who let me in, [one
Staring 'twixt sleep and glass-eyed sottishness.
Yet see—the vault has been left open, wide
As fear could wish. What, if !—Methinks the man
Look'd at me yonder ;—yes, and is still looking ;—
(*Noise again*)

And now the noise allures him, and he turns.
Hark ! Not a sound, but when the riot swells !
So still all else, that I can hear the grass
Whisper, as in lament, through its lorn hair.
I'll in, and look.—What if a hope, almost
As dreadful, for the moment, as worst fear,
Show to my heart its selfish cowardice,
And I should see her, not still laid, but risen !

Sitting perhaps, with eyes encountering mine,
 And muttering lips ! I'll take thy burden, horror,
 Upon me, for love's sake and gratitude's ;
 Oh will I, Heaven ! e'en should my knees melt
 And every pore turn to a swoon of water. [under me,

[*He enters the Vault, and returns.*

Gone ! Borne away ? or of her own self gone ?
 Gone, without friend to help, or to pursue !
 And whither ? or with help itself how dreadful !
 What hands for liliated innocence in the night !
 Perhaps that very house—What ho, there !—you !

[*The gate of the Cemetery is loudly shut.*

He shuts the gate ! he shuts, and is himself
 Gone ! and forbid it, Heaven, not for my sake,
 But hers, but hers, left me, perhaps on purpose,
 To call in vain, and 'gainst the bolts grow mad !
 Pardon, sweet Heavens ! I'll not be mad, for fear
 Of madness, but be calm. What ho, there ! Stay !
 Come back, for Heaven's sweet sake, and ope the doors.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in AGOLANTI'S House in Florence. AGOLANTI discovered looking out of an open window, and then quitting it. Sound of lutes in the distance.*

Ago. That sound of homeward lutes, which I arose
 Out of my restless bed, to feel companion'd with,
 For some few passing moments, was the last
 To-night in Florence. Not a footstep more
 Touches the sleeping streets ; that now seem witch'd
 With the same fears that walk around me still,
 Ready to greet me with unbearable eyes.

All air seems whispering of me ; and things visible
 Take meaning in their shapes, not safe to know.

Oh that a masculine and religious soul [fear ?
 Should be thus feeble ! And why ! what should I
 My name has worship still ; and still will have it,

If honourable wealth and sacred friends
 Can shield it from mad envy ; and if I err'd
 Sometimes as husband, she I loved err'd more,
 With spirit so swelling as outstrain'd her life.
 Oh, every man's infirmities, more or less,
 Mix with his love ; and they who in excess
 Feel not all passions, felt not love like mine,
 Nor knew what worlds, when my despair seem'd
 angriest,

I could have given for one, for but one look
 Of sure and heartfelt pity in her eyes.
 But she is gone ; and for whate'er I did
 Not well, I have humbled me to the god of power ;
 And given the shrine, near which her dust is laid,
 New glorious beams of paintings and of gold,
 Doubling its heaven to the white angelical tapers :
 For which they say the sovereign Holiness
 Himself will thank me. And yet,—thus, even thus,
 I feel,—a shudderer at the very silence,
 Which seems preparing me some angriness.
 I'll close the window ; and rouse Ippolito
 To read to me in some religious book.

[*Going towards the window, he stops and listens.*]

What was it ? a step ? a voice ?

Gin. [*is heard outside.*]

Agolanti !

Francesco Agolanti ! husband !

Ago. [*crossing himself, and moving towards the window.*] It draws me,

In horror, to look on it.—Oh God !—I see it ! [light.
 There is—something there—standing in the moon-

Gin. Come forth, and help me in—Oh help me in !

Ago. It speaks ! [*very loudly.*] I cannot bear the
 dreadfulness !

The horror's in my throat, my hair, my brain !
 Detestable thing ! witch ! mockery of the blessed !
 Hide thee ! Be nothing ! Come heaven and earth
 betwixt us !

[*He closes the shutters in a frenzy, and then rushes apart.*]

Oh God ! a little life ;—a little reason ;—
 Till I reach the arms of the living.—Ippolito !
 Tonio ! Giuseppe ! Lights ! Wake Father Angelo !
 [*He staggers out.*]

SCENE IV.—*A retired corner in Florence, in front of RONDINELLI'S House, with Garden-wall and Trees. RONDINELLI out of doors, musing.*

Ron. A gentle night, clothed with the moon and silence.—

Blessed be God, who lets us see the stars ;
 Who puts no black and sightless gulf between
 Those golden gazers out of immensity,
 And mortal eyes, yearning with hope and love !—
 She 's now a blessed spirit beyond those lights,
 With happy eternal cheek. And yet, methinks,
 Serious as well as sweet is bliss in heaven,
 And permits pity for those that are left mourning.
 Gentle is greatest and habitual nature !
 Gentle the starry space ! gentle the air !
 Gentle the softly ever-moving trees !
 Gentle time past and future ; both asleep,
 While the quick present is loud by daylight only :
 And gently I come to Nature to be worthy
 Of comfort and of her, and mix myself
 With the everlasting mildness in which she lives.—
 Sweetest and best ! my couch a widower seems,
 Altho' it knew thee not ; and I came forth
 To join thee as I could ; for thou and I
 Are thus unhoused alike, and in no home.
 The wide earth holds us both.

GINEVRA enters, and halts apart, looking at him.

Gin. Antonio !

Ron. Oh earth and heaven ! What art thou ?

Gin. Fear not to look on me, Antonio !

I am Ginevra—buried, but not dead,

And have got forth and none will let me in.
 Even my mother is frighten'd at my voice,
 And I have wandered to thy gentle doors.
 Have pity on me, good Antonio,
 And take me from the dreadful streets at night.

Ron. Oh Heaven! Oh all things terrible and
 beautiful!

Art thou not angel, showing me some dread sight
 Of trial and reproof? Or art thou indeed
 Still living, and may that hand be touch'd with mine?

[*She has held out her hand to him.*]

Gin. Clasp it, and help me towards thy door;
 for wonder

And fear, and that long deadly swoon, have made
 Me too a terror to myself, and scarcely
 I know how I stand thus.

Ron. [*moving slowly, but eagerly, and breathless
 towards her.*] Infold us, air!

Infold us, night and time, if it be vision!

If not—if not—

[*He touches her hand and clasps her to his heart.*]

It is Ginevra's self,

And in Antonio's arms!—She faints! Oh sweetest!
 Oh cheek, whose tears have been with mine—
 She'll die!

She'll die, and I shall have kill'd her!

Gin. [*sliding down on her knees.*] Strength has risen
 o'er me from the depths of weakness.

Oh Signor Rondinelli! Oh good Antonio,
 Be all I think thee, and think not ill of me,
 Nor let me pass thy threshold, having a fear
 Of the world's speech to stain a spotless misery.

Ron. Oh rise; and when I think that thou canst
 stand

Unhelp'd of these most glad but reverent arms,
 Aloof will I wait from thee, as far apart
 As now I closely grasp'd thee. I was mad,
 And am, with joy, to find thee alive, and near me;

But, oh blest creature ! Oh lady ! Antonio's angel !
Say but the word—do—and I love thee so,
That after thou hast tasted food and wine,
Myself will bear thee to thy house, thy husband,
Laying a heaven on his repentant heart.

Gin. Never. The grave itself has been between us ;
The hand of Heaven has parted us, acknowledg'd
By his own driving me from his shrieking doors :
And none but thy door, and a convent's now,
To which thy honourable haste will guide me,
Shall open to me in this world again.
Shelter me till the morn. Thou hast a mother ?

Ron. Blessed be Heav'n, I have ;—a right good
mother—

Gentle, and strong, and pious. She will be yours,
So long as our poor walls boast of inclosing you,
And instantly. You scarcely shall have set
Your foot in the house, but with religious joy,
She will arise, and take you to her bed,
And make a child of you, lady, till you sleep.

Gin. Blessed be Heav'n indeed. I can walk
strangely. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the House of RONDINELLI,
who enters.*

Ron. Five blessed days, and not a soul but we
Knows what this house in its rich bosom holds.
The man whom dear Diana bribed to secrecy
For our sakes, is now secret for his own ;
And here our guest is taken for a kinswoman,
Fled from a wealthy but a hated suitor,
Out of no hatred, haply, to myself ;

For which, as well as for her own sweet sake,
 The servants love her, and will keep her close.
 She holds my mother's hand, and loves her eyes ;—
 And yester evening she twice spake my name,
 Meaning another's. Hence am I most proud,
 Hence potent ; hence, such bliss it is to love
 With smallest thought of being loved again,
 That though I know not how this heav'n on earth
 Can change to one still heavenlier, nor less holy,
 I am caught up, like saints in ecstasies,
 Above the ground ;—tread air ;—see not the streets
 Through which I pass, for swiftness of delight,
 And hugging to my secret heart one bosom.
 I live as though the earth held but two faces,
 And mine perpetually look'd on hers.

Enter GIULIO.

How now, sweet Giulio ? why so hush'd ? our
 visitor

No longer sleeps by day. [GIULIO *kisses his hand.*
 And why this style

Of pretty reverence and zeal, as though
 You came betwixt myself and some new trouble ?

Giu. Nay, sir.

Ron. You smile, to reassure me. Well ;
 Yet you breathe hard, and have been flying hither,
 Your pretty plumage beaten with the wind,
 And look as haggard pale as when you brought
 The daybreak to us from that cage, and found
 Safe-hous'd our bird of paradise. What is it ?

Giu. I came, that Marco might not come. I
 thought,

Dear lord and master, Giulio's lips had best
 Bring news of one whose face the servants know not,
 Now in the hall asking to speak with you.

Ron. What face ?—Who is it ?

Giu. He saw me, and started ;
 And yet not angrily.

Ron. Who saw ? No kinsman
Of my dear mother's guest ?

Giu. No, sir ; no *kinsman*.

Ron. No officer from the court or clergy ?

Giu. Neither.

Ron. Our mutual friends are all, this instant, with
us,

Here, in the house. They, if they saw this man—
Say—would they know him ?

Giu. Surely, sir ; none better,
Or with less willingness ; though five short days
Have bow'd him down as with a score of years ;
His eye that was so proud, now seems but stretch'd
With secret haste and sore anxiety ;
And what he speaks, he seems yet not to think of.

Ron. Come, let us speak his name, lest a mad
chance

That 'tis not he, make me repent the cowardice.

'Tis he ? the man ?

Giu. The Signor Agolanti.

Ron. [*Aside.*] Life is struck black. Yet not so,
sweetest face,

Not so. He shall not hurt a hair of thy head,
While the earth holds us.—Guess you what he
knows ?

Giu. All.

Ron. How ?

Giu. I saw, coming from out his door,
The sexton's boy, his lowering front in smiles
For some triumphant craft ; and not long afterwards
Came he, half staggering, shrouding with his cap
His haggard eyes. He bent his steps this way,
And I took wings before him, to give Marco
Speech for him should he come, and be his har-
Sir, with yourself. [*binger,*

Ron. Best boy ! my friend, and brother !
But, Giulio, say you not a word elsewhere.
You understand me ?

Giu. Oh sir,—yes.

Ron. Bid Marco

Conduct him hither.

Giu. Geri and myself

May remain then? Not within hearing, sir,

But within call?

Ron. Good lad! but there's no need.

See you, that not another eye in the house

Behold him coming.—Let him be shown up.

[*Exit GIULIO ; and after a while, enter AGOLANTI, looking round the room. They pause a little, and regard one another.*]

Ago. You know why I am here?

Ron. I do.

Ago. Five days—

[*Aside*] Rouse thee, Agolanti. Never shook'st thou yet

At living face :—what quail'd thee, coming hither?

[*To RONDINELLI.*] Five days, and nothing told a husband?

Ron. Nothing!

Ago. Nothing that he deem'd mortal.—But with Am I thus speaking? With one honourable? [whom One who, though lawless in his wish, was held Scrupulous in action? of nice thought for others?

Ron. The angel who came hither, is angel still.

Ago. Signor Rondinelli, respect this grief.

It respects thee, if thou art still the man

I thought thee once. A graver faith than most,

And love most loving, if its truth were known,

Did, from excess of both—But what is past,

Is past ;—a gentleman is before me ;—his foe,

Or one he deem'd such, at a disadvantage ;

Illness, on all sides, gone ;—I am here ; am ready

To beg her pardon for that sore mistake,

Which for its very madness, friends, methinks,

Might haste to pardon ;—and so take her home.

Ron. Your words are gentle, Signor Agolanti.—

I thank you ; and would to Heav'n, what must be borne,
Were always borne so well. The thing you speak of,
Seems easy, but in truth is not so.

Ago. How ?

Ron. A bar has risen.

Ago. A bar !

Ron. Which, to speak briefly,
Has render'd it not possible.

Ago. Not possible !

[*Aside.*] He said that she was "angel still."—[*To*
RONDINELLI.] She still
Is living ?

Ron. Yes.

Ago. And here ?

Ron. She is so.

Ago. Able
To move ? recover'd ?

Ron. She is still but weak,
Yet hourly gaining strength.

Ago. What hinders then—
You do not speak. Tell me what strange prevention,
What inconceivable "bar," I think, you call'd it—

Ron. Signor Francesco, I shall distress you greatly ;
And, for all sakes, as you will see too well,
Would to God any other man on earth
Had to make this disclosure.

Ago. In God's name then,
What is it ?

Ron. Her own consent would be required.

Ago. Well ?

Ron. And 'twould not be given.—She'll not
return. [She's well ?

Ago. Will not return !—How "not return ?"
She's better—perhaps would wait some days—yes,
yes—

Well, sir—when will she ? I'll see her instantly,
And then we'll settle when. But you can tell me

At once.—Be pleased to say, sir, when you think
She'll come.

Ron. 'Tis her own terrible word I speak, sir,
The night when she stood houseless at my door,
Dead to the past, alive to virtue only,
And honourable grief. She will return
Never.

Ago. Never return ! Ginevra Agolanti
Never return ? not come to her own house ? [tion !
Impossible !—Witchcraft has been here ! Seduc-
Where is she ? Let me see her—instantly, sir !
Would you part man and wife ?

Ron. Alas ! she holds them
Parted already, not by me.

Ago. A wife
Has but one home, sir.

Ron. Sir, she thought so.

Ago. Sir, fever and delirium would not have made
A friend unpardonable in my eyes
For having mis-beheld me.

Ron. Surely, sir :—
Yet I conceive there is a difference.
But I am not the judge.

Ago. You are, sir ;—I fear
You are ;—I fear you have made yourself the
judge, sir,
The criminal—the detainer. Why say nothing
Of her being here ? Why let me find it out
From a gross boy, who has quarrell'd with his
master,
And makes my shame his profit ? Housed with
thee, too !

Rcn. Nay, in the melancholy convent housed,
Soon as its doors, now hung with flowers for Rome,
Be open to admit the appeals of sorrow !

Ago. Appeals of lies and crimes.—And so my
wounds
Must be torn open afresh ! hidden from none !

All eyes must stare upon me! I demand
 To see my wife;—the lady Agolanti:—
 She is detain'd here. Horrible light begins
 To dawn; there has been dreadful mockery—
 Conspiracy! Worse! You have dishonour'd her.

Ron. 'Tis false.—Be calm. Let both be calm,
 nor startle

Feminine ears with words. Wait in this room,
 Here, on the left, a while:—I'll bring herself
 To look upon thy speech, if it so please her;
 If not, my mother, sir,—you have heard of her,—
 From whom, so help me God, I never yet
 Beheld her separate.

Ago. I demand—

Ron.

This way.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Another Room.*

*Enter RONDINELLI; and to him, from the opposite side,
 GIULIO with FIORDILISA, who kisses his hand.*

Ron. Sweet Fiordilisa, you attend your mistress
 Too closely. You grow pale.

Fior. 'Twas Giulio's paleness, sir,
 Struck me with mine.

Ron. Fear not for him, or any one;
 You see me pale, yet see me smiling too:
 Now go, and with the like good flag advanced
 Of comfort beyond trouble, tell your lady
 I would entreat one word with her, alone.

Fior. I'll think, sir, trouble cannot come to stay
 Within so quiet and so bless'd a house;
 And so I'll try to look. [*Exit FIORDILISA.*]

Ron. [*who has been writing something.*] And now you,
 Giulio,

Go tell the friends who come to greet her rise
 From the sick bed, what shade has follow'd them.
 I fear, from some deep whispering on the stairs

I caught but now, as we were coming up,
They heard us wrangling. Say, all 's quiet now—
They 'll see me soon ; and give this to my mother.

[*Exit GIULIO with the paper ; and enter GINEVRA.*

My mother would have been before me, lady,
To beg an audience for her son ; but you,
Being still the final and sole arbitress
Of a new question, come with sudden face,
It might befit you also, for more reasons
Than I may speak, to be its first sole hearer.

Gin. What is it ?

Ron. Nothing that need bring those eyes
Out of the orbs of their sweet self-possession.
Your thoughts may stay within their heaven, and
hear it.

'Twixt it and you, there is all heaven, and earth.

Gin. My story is known, ere I have reached the

Ron. Even so. [convent ?

Gin. And somebody has come to claim me ?

From *him* ?

Ron. Not *from* him.

Gin. From the church then ? No !

The state ?

Ron. I said not *from* him. He is shaken
Far more than you should be, being what you are,
And all hearts loving you.

Gin. Himself !

Ron. Himself.—

His haughty neck yet stooping with that night,
Which smote his hairs half grey. [*She weeps.*

Gin. [*Aside.*] Alas !—yet more

Alas, that I should say it.—Not loud then ?

Not angry ?

Ron. Only with your vows of refuge,
And those that stand betwixt his will and power ;
Else humble ; nay, in tears, and seeking pardon.
[*Aside.*] She's wrung to the core !—With grief
is't ? and what grief ?

Oh now, all riddles of the heart of love,
 When 'twould at once be generous, yet most mean ;
 All truth, yet craft ; a sacrifice, yet none ;
 Risk all in foppery of suppos'd desert,
 And then be ready in anguish to cry out
 At being believ'd, and thought the love it is,
 Martyr beyond all fires, renouncing heaven
 By very reason that none can so have earn'd it ; —
 Oh, if she pities him, and relents, and goes
 Back to that house, let her yet weep for me !

Gin. When I said "Never" to that word
 "return,"

He had not suffer'd thus ; had not shown sorrow ;
 Was not bow'd down with a grey penitence.—
 Sir—I would say, kind host—most kind of men—
 My friend and my preserver—

Ron. Say no more,
 So you think well of me.

Gin. I could say on,
 And twenty times as much, so you would think it
 Best, some day hence.—Speak not.—

Ron. Yes, honour bids me ;
 Honour above all doubts, even of poor self,
 Whether to gain or lose ;—bids me say bravely,
 Bewise, while generous—Guard the best one's peace,
 Whoe'er that is ;—*her* peace—the rights of goodness
 And vindication of the o'er-seeing heavens,
 High above all wrong hearts,—his,—or mine own.

Gin. Although you call me "best," who am not
 I'll write that last and noblest admonition [so,
 Within the strongest memory of my soul,
 For all our sakes. The way to him.

Ron. One word.
 My mother—she—will see you again sometimes
 In your lot's bettering from its former state,
 As surely it must, your friends now knowing all,
 He sad for all.

Gin. It is a help I look for.

Ron. Her son—forgive him that at this last moment
He makes this first and only mention of him,
Since you vouchsafed to rest your troubles with us,—
His first—his last ;—may he too, as a friend,
Hope—that a thought of him—a passing memory—
Will sometimes mix with hers ?

Gin. To think of her
Will be to think of both.

Ron. Oh gentlest creature,
If what I am about to say to thee
Offend thee in the least, count it such madness
As innocence may pity ; and show no sign
Of thy displeasure. Be but mute ; and sorrow
With as mute thanks shall resume common words.
But if, in thy late knowledge of Antonio,
Thou hast seen nought, that under happier omens
And with all righteous sanction, might have hinder'd
From piecing out his nature's imperfections [thee
With thy sweet thoughts and hourly confidence,
Reach him, oh reach, but for one blissful moment,
And to make patience beautiful for ever,
Thy most true woman's hand.

[She turns aside and holds out to him her hand.

My heart would drink it.

[He strains it with both hands against his bosom.

Do thy worst, memory, now.—We have known each
other

For twenty years in this. Your tears embolden you
Even to look at me through their glittering veil,
And set me some sweet miserable task :—
I understand ;—yes, we'll go quietly,
And you will let me keep this hand to the door ?
We will walk thus. This little walk contains
A life !—Might you say one word to me at parting ?

Gin. Antonio !—may your noble heart be happy

*[She clasps her hands, and speaks with constant
vehemence, looking towards the audience.*

Alas ! alas ! Why was that one word utter'd

To bear down the last patience of my soul,
 And make me cry aloud to Heaven and misery ?
 I am most miserable. I am a creature
 That now, for fifteen years, from childhood upwards,
 Till this hard moment, when the heavens forbid it,
 Have known not what it was to shed a tear, [eyes
 Which others met with theirs. Therefore mine
 Did learn to hush themselves, and young, grow dry ;
 For my poor father knew not how I loved him,
 Nor mother neither ; and my severe husband
 Demanded love, not knowing lovingness.
 And now I cry out, wishing to be right,
 And being wrong ; and by the side of me
 Weeps the best heart, which ought not so to weep,
 And duty's self seems to turn round upon me,
 And mock me ; by whose law nevertheless
 Do I abide, and will I ; so pray Heaven
 To keep me in my wits, and teach me better.
 Turn me aside, sweet saints, and let me go.

[*While RONDINELLI, who has fallen on his knee, is stretching his hands towards her, the voices of AGOLANTI, COLONNA, and DA RIVA, are heard in violent quarrel*.*

Gin. His voice ! in anger too ? Did you not say
 That he was calm ? Heart-stricken ?

Ron.

He seem'd so.

* The following words of the quarrel are supposed to be uttered during the most violent confusion, and partly at once :—

Ago. Who sent you here ? I never asked for you,
 Nor you—

Col. And who for you ?

Ago.

Who ?

Riva.

Shut the door,

I say.

Col. Ay, who ? What idiot, or what brute
 Could that be ?

Ago. Heaven itself, whom you blaspheme.
 My voice shall reach it.

Riva.

Door ! the door ! he has open'd it
 On purpose ; see you not ? Follow him out.

Gen. Perhaps is so, and they mistake his sorrow.
There's mercy in it : for when danger comes,
Duty cries loudest. Ay, and here's the friend
Will not forsake me still, but bear me on,
Right where the trumpet of the angel calls.

[*He speeds her out.*]

SCENE THE LAST.—*Another Room in RONDINELLI'S House.* AGOLANTI and COLONNA, in loud dispute, with their swords drawn, DA RIVA interposing.

Ago. I say—

Col. What say you then ?

Riva. Well, let him speak.

Ago. I say, that nothing upon earth, no insolence—

Col. House coward !

Riva. Hush.

Ago. Nor prudent friend—

Col. Still, coward.

Ago. Nor talk of law, nor threats of church itself,
Shall move my foot one jot from where I stand,
Till she whom law, church, heaven and earth join'd
to me,

Shall join me again, and quit this infamous house.

Riva. To be twice slain in thine ?

Col. And twice thrust forth,
If she return to fright thee ?

Ago. I've seen the page here ;
Seen you ; guess at your women ; and shall know
What hideous trap has steep'd her soul in blushes,
If she come not.

Col. [*going to attack him.*] Blush in thy grave to say so.
Enter RONDINELLI with GINEVRA, followed by his Mother, OLIMPIA, DIANA, GIULIO, FIORDILISA, and Servants.

Ron. Forbear ! an angel comes. Take her, and pray
Just Heaven to make her happy as thyself.

Col. Antonio, thou art damn'd to think it. See—

Riva. He shrinks from her again in very fear,
Which in his rage of vanity he'll avenge.

Ago. I hear not what they say, my poor Ginevra,
Thinking of thee alone.—Come, bear thee up,
And bravely,—as thou dost. We'll leave this place—
This way—So—so—

Rita. Antonio, will you let him ?
Think of herself.—'Tis none of yours, this business,
But the whole earth's.

Ron. She will not have me stay him—
I dare not—My own house too—See, she goes with
him.

Rita. Call in the neighbours—[GIULIO goes out.]

Col. Do, there's a right soul—
Tell all.

Ago. She's with me still ! She's mine ! Who stays
Olim and *Diana*. Ginevra ! sweetest friend ! [us ?

Ago. Who triumphs now ? Who laughs ? Who
mocks at pandars,

Cowards, and shameless women ? [hearken.

Gin. [bursting away from him.] Loose me, and
Madness will crush my senses in, or speak : [me ;
The fire of the heavenward sense of my wrongs crowns
The voice of the patience of a life cries out of me ;
Every thing warns me. I will *not* return.

I claim the judgment of most holy church.

I'll not go back to that unsacred house,

Where heavenly ties restrain not hellish discord,
Loveless, remorseless, never to be taught.

I came to meet with pity, and find shame ;

Tears, and find triumph ; peace, and a loud sword.

The convent walls—Bear me to those—In secret,

If it may be ; if not, as loudly as strife,—

Drawing a wholesome tempest through the streets ;

And there, as close as bonded hands may cling,

I'll hide, and pray for ever, to my grave.—

Come you, and you, and you, and help me walk.

Ago. Let her not stir. Nor dare to stir one soul,
Lest in the madness of my wrongs I smite ye.

Gin. [to AGOLANTI.] Look at me, and remember.
Think how oft

I've seen as sharp a point turn'd on thyself
 To fright me ; how, upon a weaker breast ;
 And what a world of shames unmasculine
 Thesewoman's cheeks would have to burn in telling.—
 The white wrath festers in his face, and then
 He's devilish.

Ron. Will you let her fall ? She swoons.

[*He catches her in his arms.*]

Ago. [*turning to kill him.*] Where'er she goes, she
 shall not go there.

Col. [*intercepting him with his own sword.*] Dastard !
 Strike at a man so pinion'd ?

Ago. Die then for him. [*Strikes at COLONNA.*]

Diana and Olim. Help ! Help !

[*The doors fly open, enter GIULIO followed by Officer
 and Guard.*]

Giu. 'Tis here ? Part them, for mercy's sake.

Col. Die thou. [*He pierces him.*]

Riva. He's slain ! What hast thou done ?

Col.

The deed

Of his own will. One must have perish'd, sir [*to
 Officer ;*]

One, my dear friend [*to DA RIVA.*] Which was the
 corse to be ?

Riva [*looking at it.*] There's not a heart here, but
 will say, 'Twas he. [*Curtain falls.*]

THE END.

October 1st, 1849.

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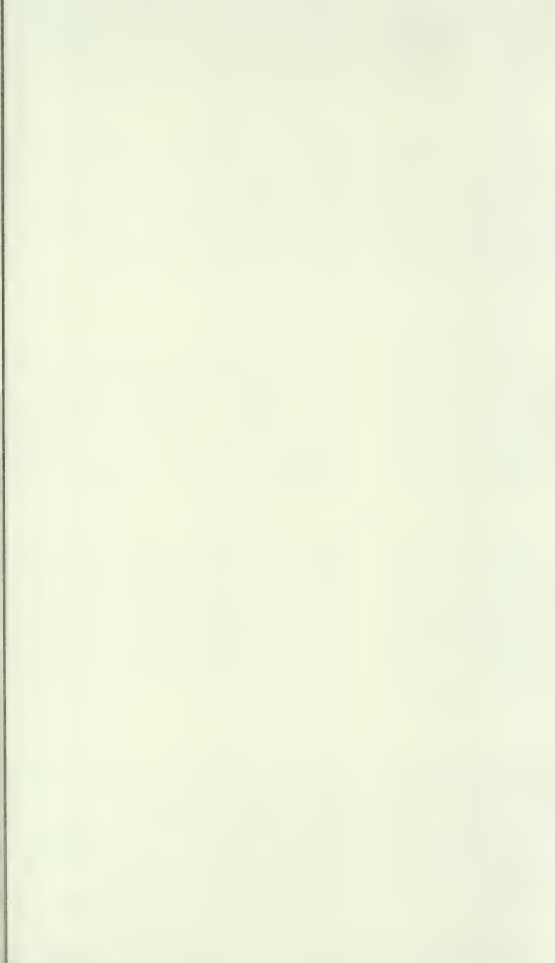
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